

# Harmonia

Titles in the series

Mimesis 2010

Philia 2011

Sophia 2013

Elysia 2014

Harmonia 2019

Limited Edition of Twenty-Five Numbered Copies signed

by the publisher.

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# HARMONIA

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## Preface

For most people the life is fast conveyed into the historic hinterland with the clatter of soil onto the coffin, or the fading whirl of the crematorium before collective amnesia rapidly sets in. Silence. Hopefully, the tributes, articles and reminiscences contained within these pages will offer some memorial and contribution to the collective memory. Lest we forget.

As we have recently paid our respects to the first world war anniversary year, it seems only appropriate to celebrate the work of two very different men who served in that war: Lieut-Commander Guy Descarrieres Sharp and Private Peter Mahony, both of whom wrote about their wartime experiences. Guy is Ruth Sharp and Tristram Alexander Prothero Clark's great grandfather. We also pay tribute to Robbie Mildren-Prothero, my inimitable ex-mother-in-law, and her famous father, Prothero the Bad. Her favourite niece, Penelope Stewart, daughter of Marjorie Penzie Prothero, made an invaluable contribution to Robbie's portrait.

The Royal Air Force is represented in my father's memoir of his attendance at Haile Selassie's Coronation in Addis Ababa in 1930 when he flew there with two fellow airmen from their base in Aden. Evelyn Waugh noted their presence in his *Remote People* (1931) in his coverage of the coronation. Ruth Armley's description of her war in London provides an eye-witness account of the Blitz suffered by the inhabitants of that great city. Her account offers a female perspective: that of a very young civilian actively risking her life in wartime service. Brenda Sharp's lucid account of being an evacuee indicates the kind of upheaval suffered by millions of children.

Oliver Sharp's career as a submariner, following in his father's footsteps, and Barbara Compton's more recent reminiscences of life in the army during the Cold War widen the scope of our coverage of those who have served our country.

Heroes were in aeroplanes, submarines, ships, ambulances, parachutes, tanks, in churches, factories, schools, mothers at home, on rooftops and those who just kept things going with a smile and a joke: we salute them all. The description of Sopley early warning radar station deals with the Cold War in Hampshire. The war that

*HARMONIA* (Ἀρμονία):

Greek name meaning 'concord, harmony'.

In mythology, this is the name of the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. Her Latin name is Concordia.

cast a cold shadow over every day of our post-war lives. As a foil to Western bloc accounts, we have a first-hand account of life in communist Czechoslovakia by Ing. Jiří Köhler. Matthew Snowdon, my younger son, became a cub reporter when he interviewed one of the crew of HMS Glasgow at their reunion in Southsea in 2012. Boy's (RGC's) reminiscences point to a faraway world of fathers and sons sharing military experiences in a tough post-war world where male stereotypes reigned supreme.

Sheena Clark's altruism is recalled in the 1977 newspaper description – one of many – of her work which demonstrates that marginalisation can affect people of all classes. Their accounts may help some to re-balance their attitude to such minority groups. The other departed friend is Harold Rowan who excelled at bookselling and the apt anecdote. Local interest in a marginalized people, the Travellers, is represented in Angela and Anita's Travellers' Tales which only hints at their invaluable educational and social work.

Norman Sharp, Guy's brother, was a celebrated cleric whose association with Iran spanned many years, and whose life was an example to us all. Jill Truefitt was a dear friend whose staunch support was instrumental in the production of the first book on Frederick Carter<sup>1</sup> and whose trip to D.H. Lawrence's Villa Beau Soleil was connected with our joint interest in Carter and Lawrence. My oldest friend, the late Anthony Gwyer-Gibbs, is also remembered but, of course, words cannot fully capture the shared experiences of a good friendship. Good friends are rare.

The fugitive nature of memory and the speed with which a life is buried stalk this book. In the attempt to celebrate the life of Peter Goodall, the past vied awkwardly with the present as myth clung tenaciously to the emerging facts. The task of presenting the sometimes disparate views of Peter's life has been attempted in these pages. Matthew Alexander's reminiscence of Peter Goodall is therefore an astringent contrast to other perceptions of Peter expressed elsewhere.

Peter's life ended with confusion, some acrimony and mixed feelings so his shade dallied mischievously in the margins of people's memories. John Tatchell Freeman has fortunately played a brilliant Boswell to Peter's Johnson using his remarkable memory to help recreate our version of Peter the Print, late of The Bull Head Gate, Guildford and Pier Street, Ventnor. Ron Baskerville – see note 1 – was known to Peter, John and myself as a talented artist and a splendid person. Jane Allison's superb paintings depict John,

her son William, Robert Sosner, the artist, and war veterans. The Summer Party 2018 brings us back to the present with fun, music and Captain Carrott.

At last, I have found a literary soul-mate, Prince Giuseppe Di Lampedusa, who would have completely understood why I am publishing these books – Mimesis, Sophia, Elysia, Philia, Harmonia... In his *Places of my Infancy, A Memory* [Summer 1955],<sup>2</sup> he writes:

'During these last few days (mid-June, 1955) I have been re-reading Stendhal's *Henri Brulard*. I had not read it since long ago in 1922, when I must have still been obsessed by "explicit beauty" and "subjective interest," for I remember not liking the book.

Now I cannot but agree with anyone who judges it to be Stendhal's masterpiece; it has an immediacy of feeling, an obvious sincerity, a remarkable attempt to sweep away accumulated memories and reach the essence. And what lucidity of style! What a mass of reflections, the more precious for being common to all men!

I should like to try and do the same. Indeed, it seems obligatory. When one reaches the decline of life it is imperative to try and gather together as many as possible of the sensations which have passed through our particular organism. Few can succeed in thus creating a masterpiece (Rousseau, Stendhal, Proust) but all should find it possible to preserve in some such way things which without this slight effort would be lost forever. To keep a diary, or write down one's memories at a certain age, should be a duty "State-imposed"; material thus accumulated would have inestimable value after three or four generations; many of the psychological and historical problems that assail humanity would be resolved. There are no memoirs, even those written by insignificant people, which do not include social and graphic details of first-rate importance.'

1. *Frederick Carter A.R.E. (1883–1967), A Study of his Etchings*, by Richard Grenville Clark, Apocalypse Press 1998

2. Giuseppe Di Lampedusa, *Two Stories & A Memory*, Translated from the Italian by Archibald Colquhoun, Introduction by E.M. Forster, C.H., Collins and Harvill Press, London (1962).

*Richard Grenville Clark, made an Honorary Citizen of Redonda, (Ciudadanos Honrarios De Redonda) in 1999: Richmal Crompton, La Morada Maligna, Reino de Redonda, Madrid, 2001 – (Titles and Offices bestowed by Javier Marías, pp.421–42.*

## Robbie Evelyn Prothero-Mildren (1925–2018) – a tribute together with Admiral Prothero the Bad



*Bertha (nee White) Prothero  
(1889–1993)*



*Capt. Reginald Charles Prothero  
(1849–1927)*

*Later to become Rear-Admiral  
Reginald Charles Prothero, C.B. M.V.O.*



*Sue, Richard and Robbie*

The following tribute by RGC was read out at Robbie's humanist funeral which he missed hearing owing to being late!<sup>1</sup>

'Robbie had a remarkable ability to restore houses by convincing craftsmen to do the work cheaply at Robbie rates and, secondly, by having a radical vision of what needed to be done. Floors would be removed; walls re-positioned; practical areas created; gardens landscaped and renewed. Had she been given working capital, she would have made a fortune and if she had been born later she would no doubt be hosting one of the many house restoration programmes and be a celebrity.

Robbie's life changed after she trained as a potter with such eminent potters as Bernard Leach and Ray Finch. When she stayed with us for six months, it was fascinating hearing her talk about the technical aspects of pottery. That knowledge was exhibited in great detail when an Oxford potter friend came to visit her. Over a four hour period the two women discussed all manner of pottery technicalities and it was clear that Robbie was an expert in her field.'

\* \* \* \* \*

All in-law relationships, let alone 'step' this and that, are complex and our relationship with Robbie was up and down over the years but it became clear that she had always carried the burden of being the 'girl' in the family. Towards the end of her life when RGC was helping her draw up her Will, she said that she felt she had been shunted out of the way when she was put out of sight, with her brother Ivor, at The Lord Wandsworth College boarding school at Long Sutton, Hook, which we visited with her in the 1990s. Her sister Marjorie Penzie was educated at The Royal Naval School and brother Eric at TS Mercury. His mother should have accepted a place at Britannia as would have been appropriate, as her late husband was a Rear-Admiral, but she was too worried about the cost for his tuition and uniform.

Robbie's strong practical nature and training in Home Economics gave her backbone but her life was shadowed by a feeling of regret, if not inferiority. Pottery, as I remarked above, gave her

a means of self-expression and led to her employment as Head of Art in a school after her divorce from Leo in 1976. She lived first in Westerham then in Rotherfield when she bought a house in the High Street from Malcolm Muggeridge's half-brother. Her re-marriage to Michael Mildren was not a success despite the elaborate wedding service at St Saviours Church, Eton Villas Road, London, NW.3, on 26 July, 1985.<sup>2</sup> In her early nineties Robbie confided to RGC that the love of her life had always been unobtainable and the considerable energy and passion within her breast had never found its true object thus making her love unrequited.

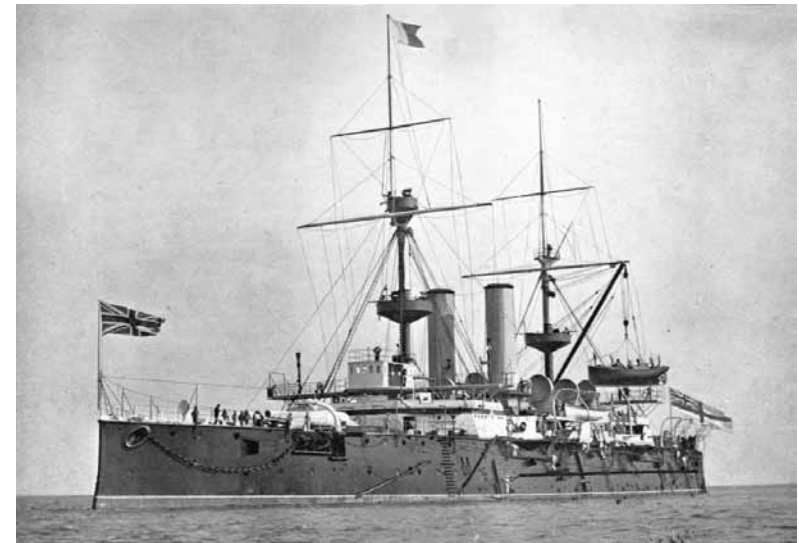
Robbie was very proud of her naval ancestry, frequently asking RGC to obtain more copies of *Fabulous Admirals*, which devoted a chapter to her father nicknamed *Prothero the Bad*. Her father's family seat had been Malpas Court, Monmouthshire in Wales.

Lowis remarks that "An Admiral of the Fleet described Robbie's father when he was a Rear-Admiral as quite the most terrifying man I ever served with. Eyes like a hawk-most piercing eyes – and a great hooked nose over a bristling beard down to his waist... Terrific shoulders, he was nearly as broad as he was long. The sailors had the greatest respect for him. Hated him at first, but grew to like him because they knew exactly where they stood. He was absolutely fair and consistent... He liked the word *boy* ... and used it more and more till finally it embraced everyone, high or low – which on occasion gave considerable offence. One afternoon the Admiral of his flagship came aboard his ship (the *Nile*) after snipe shooting on the island of Crete."

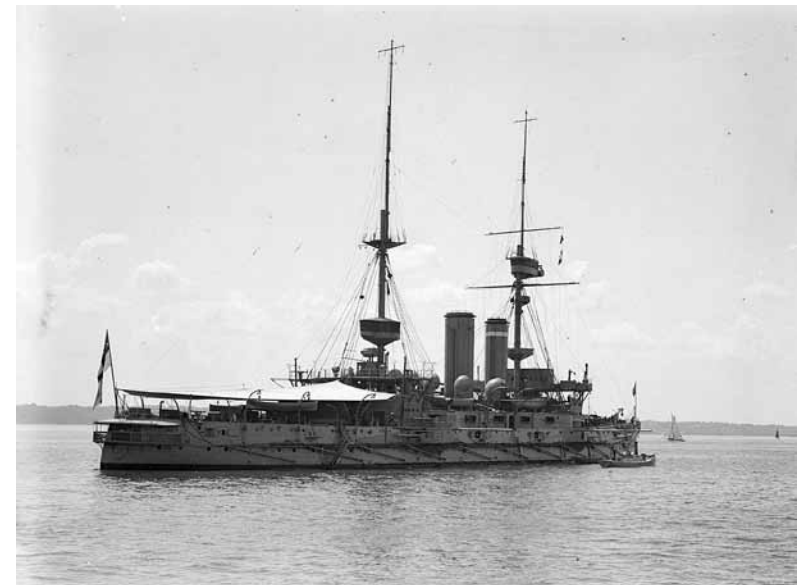
"Well, boy, had a good day? Asked the captain, as he saluted the Admiral."

In the Boer War, Captain Prothero was in charge of the Naval Brigade and at the Battle of Graspan he was severely wounded. Another of his commands was *Revenge* and Prothero the Bad found himself with a mixture of Allied vessels, protecting the Christians from the Boshi Bazooks, as the Turks were called. A number of women had been evacuated on board *Revenge*. Things reached such a pass that one day Old P. cleared lower deck.

"I've called you aft," he addressed his ship's company, "because these women are producing at a rate of knots. There are so many babies that the Medical Staff can't cope with them. Now I want some volunteers to lend a hand. Ah! There's P.O. Jones with his



HMS *Revenge*



HMS *Implacable*

hand up. Are you married, Jones?"

"Yes, sir."

"And how long have you been married?"

"Seven years, sir."

"Good. Any children?"

"One child, sir."

"One child only? Ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Now there's P.O. Smith with his hand up. How long have you been married, Smith, and how many children?"

"I bin married six years and I got six children in six years, sir."

"Six children in six years! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, too." said Old P.<sup>3</sup>

Prothero became a Naval Cadet in December 1862, a Sub-lieutenant on 22 July 1870, and a Lieutenant on 8 August, 1874.

He served the *Magpie* in 1881, then the *Tyne* then *Duke of Wellington* and ultimately moved to *Vernon* before the end of the year. Prothero was appointed to the turret ship *Devastation* on 7 January 1889.

On 30 June 1889, he became a Commander then on 7 January, he was appointed to the *Edinburgh*, based in the Mediterranean. After which on 11 June 1891, he joined the masted turret ship *Neptune* and then the *Nile* on 30 June in the Mediterranean. He became a Captain on 1 June 1895 and was given command of the battleship *Revenge* in December 1896 followed by command of the cruiser *Doris* on 27 April 1898. On 6 November 1900, for his services in South Africa, Prothero was appointed an Ordinary Member of the Third Class, or Companion, in the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (C.B). He served as captain of *Implacable* from October 1902 through May 1904.

On the occasion of the King's visit to Malta, Prothero was appointed a Member of the Fourth Class of the Royal Victorian Order (M.V.O.) on 27 April, 1903.

Prothero was placed on the Retired List on account of age and in accordance with the provisions of Order in Council of 22 February 1870 on 15 June, 1904. On 20 February 1906, he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral on the Retired List, and to Vice-Admiral on 22 July 1910.

There were four children in the Prothero family: Reginald Eric



(1916–1940) who died while serving on HMS Cape Howe which was a Q ship sunk by a U boat; Marjorie Penzie (1917–1999) who served with the QANNS during world war two; Ivor John (1922–2018) and Evelyn Bertha (1925–2018). Their father Reginald Charles met their mother Bertha White when she was a private nurse looking after Reginald Charles' sister, Lady Pitcairn Campbell (Edith Prothero)

In the late 1980s RGC asked Robbie to do a temperament quiz and she profiled as extrovert which is no surprise to those who knew her. At a party she 'would interact with strangers'; she was more 'realistic than speculative'; thought it was worse to 'to have your head in the clouds' than 'be in a rut'. She was more 'impressed by principles than emotions'; more drawn to the 'convincing than the touching'; preferred 'deadlines' to 'just whatever'; tended to choose 'somewhat impulsively to rather carefully'; she preferred to leave parties 'early with decreased energy'; was more attracted to 'imaginative people than sensible people'. She was more interested in 'what is possible' than 'what is actual' and in judging others was more swayed by 'circumstances than laws'.

We are privileged to have another tribute to Robbie from her favourite niece, Penelope M.T. Brooks (1947 – ), daughter of M.P. Prothero (Brooks), which was also read at Robbie's funeral by Mark Tyack who officiated.

My Aunt was the youngest of four children. Her Father died when she was 2 years old. He was aged 76 years and her Mother 37



years. My Grandmother was overwhelmed as she was not entitled to his Naval Pension as she was a second wife. Instead, the Navy took the two younger children into a Naval orphanage and later sent them to private school. The family were reunited during holiday periods. My Mother and her elder Brother were also educated by the Navy.

My Aunt hated her given names of Bertha Evelyn, especially Bertha, because of the reference to Big Bertha the German howitzer gun, so she called herself Robbie instead. Bertha was her Mother's first name.

Robbie was a forceful, determined and creative women. During WW2 she was a fire watcher in Essex and took a job as a supervisor on a factory floor.

On a visit from my home in Canada, I remember driving with her and my cousin in her three wheel Reliant Robin car in Loughton, Essex. As always we were late so she overtook the London coach at traffic lights as she was determined that we would board the bus to go to the Science Museum for the day. She got out of the car and banged on the door and we children climbed on board. We were about eleven years old!

The creative period of her life was varied. She spent time with Bernard Leach the 'Father of British Studio Pottery' and I see his influence in the style she developed. Later she took a job as a teacher at The Convent Of The Holy Cross in Tunbridge Wells where she persuaded The Mother Superior that she needed a purpose-built studio and she would design the interior. She had a line painted across the room in front of her desk and the students were forbidden to cross unless invited. Later she worked for an agency as a carer. Among her clients was Sir Thomas Sopwith and Margaret Tebbit wife of Lord Tebbit.

One last thought. On her Father's grave in London there is an epitaph. The last line is so apt and to me sums up my Aunt's life:

"It is not the length of life that counts but what is achieved during existence".

When my parents returned to Canada in 1966 after a three year tour with The Canadian Navy my Aunt was like a second Mother to me as I was starting my nurse training in London. She was a tremendous support to me over the years and always at the end of the telephone.

#### ENDNOTES

1. It is nearly 70 miles from Watton to Bishop's Stortford and to ensure that Sue got to Robbie's funeral on time RGC arranged to pick Sue up at 1.30 pm in Watton. The journey takes about 1 hour on average meaning that the latest he and Sue could leave to arrive for the 3.30 pm funeral would be just after 2 pm. RGC phoned Roly on arrival in Watton at 1.30 pm asking how long it would take to which Roly answered 'about thirty minutes'. Now thirty Roly minutes is over an hour for most people! In the event, after Sue disappeared into Watton at 1.30pm to buy some paint, returning by 2.45 pm and ready by 3.20 pm, we left, and arrived at 4.05 pm which meant speeding and being in traffic queues alternately! Because Sue's mobility was badly affected by recent breakages-right arm and right leg-on arrival RGC jumped out of the car to see if the service had ended leaving Sue in the car. He caught the last 5 minutes of the service, exited with the mourners and re-joined Sue some 10 minutes later. Unintentionally, RGC had locked Sue in the car.
2. Michael and Robbie knelt on a raised dais in front of the choir-stall into which trooped the choir along with their full plastic shopping bags – Tesco, Sainsbury's, etc. which they dropped by their legs on the floor in full view of the wedding guests. The choir had made no effort to wear even casually smart clothes and looked a very scruffy bunch. One felt aggrieved for Robbie. Then they sang like angels transforming the church with a sense of occasion slightly setting aside the prevailing sentiment of 'the triumph of hope over experience.'
3. All quotes are taken from Chapter VII of *Fabulous Admirals*, by Commander Geoffrey L. Lowis, A.F.C., R.N. (Ret'd), Putnam, 1957



Lieut-Commander  
Guy Descarrieres Sharp



His father, John Emilius Ernest  
Steigenberger Sharp (1847–1951)



His mother, Mary Elizabeth  
Ballance (1858–1938)



His first command was from 4 April 1915. In total, he was given Commands A6, C14 and E40. He was born in Watford, Hertfordshire, England in June 1889 to John Emilius Sharp and Mary Elizabeth Ballance. Guy Descarrieres married Olive Longair Thomson (1890–1972) in Dundee on 14 May 1915 and they had 3 children: Joan Longair (1916–1994); Leonard William Decarrieres (1921–); and Oliver Ballance (1928–2010).

## The E 40 and the First World War

by Lieut-Commander Guy Descarrieres Sharp (1889–1984)

*'In peace, sons bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their sons.'*

– Herodotus

Early in the year 1917 owing to special measures taken in the Straits of Dover, it became very hazardous for German submarines to use this passage in order to harass our merchant shipping approaching the Channel from the West, and in consequence the large German sea-going sub-marines on this duty had to pass North of Scotland on their way to their cruising grounds. The majority of our own sub-marines were employed either endeavouring to intercept them, or keeping constant watch on the approaches to the Heligoland Bight and the Kattegat for any enemy craft which might emerge.

My own boat the E.40 was attached to the Grand Fleet and was engaged on both these duties, sometimes operating from Scapa and at others from the River Tees, where our permanent base was situated.

It was usual for a submarine to be allotted a particular cruising ground and trips occupied about ten days with a few days spell in between at the Depot for recuperation, refuelling, etc. It became quite an interesting game estimating the probable routes of enemy submarines (which were always being changed) from reports received from directional wireless stations, giving the positions where wireless signals had been picked up from them.

I should perhaps mention that the Germans were not at this time aware of our progress in directional wireless, and in consequence their submarines were rather free in the use of wireless, particularly when leaving and approaching home. Our cruising groups were constantly changed in accordance with reports received, and to give some idea of the variety of positions given us, my own boat patrolled at various times areas off St Kilda, the Hebrides, the Shetlands, the coasts of Norway and the Kattegat etc. as well as in the Northern sector of the approaches to the Heligoland Bight. The results obtained by these operations were not spectacular: a few enemy submarines were torpedoed, and one or two of our boats failed to return, but no doubt the knowledge that we might appear, or a

torpedo might be expected at any moment during their passage, had some effect in keeping the Germans on tenterhooks the whole time they were at sea, even though nothing might be in sight.

The Germans were much faster and had larger and better guns than we had, so that it was generally useless to attempt to attack them on the surface. For success it was necessary for us to see the other submarine and get below the surface before being seen ourselves, and then attempt a torpedo attack. What usually happened was that both submarines saw each other at about the same time, both dived, and a condition of stale mate ensued, neither being able to see the other. This happened to us on several occasions.

On 2 August 1918 we were on patrol off the Norwegian Coast. It was a perfect summer day, the sea was like glass, there was hardly a cloud in the sky and the visibility was very good. About 11 am smoke appeared on the horizon to the West and a little later the masts of warships.

We immediately dived and moved under water so as to intercept the approaching vessels. We had had no warning to expect any of our own ships so the possibility of the newcomers being German added quite a zest to our otherwise commonplace manoeuvre.

However, we soon recognized them as a flotilla of our own destroyers with one or two light cruisers, followed by an aircraft carrier, and numerous other masts began to appear over the horizon.

We hurriedly rose to the surface and were careful to make all our recognition signals as conspicuously as possible as one or two of my friends had been given a very bad time by our own destroyers owing to their being mistaken for U boats.

Nothing untoward occurred however, and we lay on the surface for several hours of that wonderful summer day, watching the whole Grand Fleet pass on one of their periodical sweeps, and I have never seen a more splendid sight. It was well after tea time before the last of our fleet had passed and we were free to move. We then proceeded slowly on the surface to the North East, keeping a very sharp look-out in the hope that we might intercept a German submarine which had been keeping out of the way of our destroyers, and now thought it safe to resume its uninterrupted passage home.

After about an hour's steaming a small object appeared on the horizon and we dived. As it came nearer I recognized it as a

German submarine, and the long hoped for chance of making a successful torpedo attack seemed about to be realized.

We were getting nicely into position but unfortunately the light was fading, and before we got near enough, it became so dark that I could no longer see through the periscope. I decided to rise to the surface, and continue the attack, in the hope that by keeping bows-on, the U boat would not recognize us before we got within torpedo range. The small gun we had was of little use in such an emergency, as it was mounted behind the conning tower, and could not be fired ahead, besides which, its effective range was not much more than that of our torpedoes.

The enemy was not long in seeing us after we emerged, and promptly turned towards us. We were then moving straight at each other in the dusk about two miles apart, and as long as the enemy remained bows-on he presented such a small target that it was hopeless to attempt to use a torpedo. If only my gun had been mounted forward I could have opened fire with every chance of success. However, I ordered my gun's crew on deck in case she kept right on, and gave me no chance to use my torpedoes, which could only be fired straight ahead.

#### HIS LAST COMMAND: HMS E40



*HMS E40 was a British E class submarine launched by Palmer, Jarrow in 1916 and was completed by Armstrong Whitworth, Newcastle upon Tyne. Length. 181 ft.; Speed. 15.25 Knots; Complement. 30.*

Then ensued an exciting few minutes while the boats rapidly approached each other, and I waited to see what the enemy would do. When we were about three quarters of a mile apart, the U boat suddenly turned to the right giving me a fair target. I swung my boat round until I was pointing a little ahead of her, and fired my first torpedo. Return fire was falling into the water beyond us, but sufficiently near to make it pretty certain that we would be hit at the second or third shot.

She could now be recognized as one of the largest U boats, mounting two modern four inch guns to our one antiquated twelve pounder, so that it would have been suicide for us to attempt an artillery duel, unless we could fire first, and get the range before she did! This was now impossible, so I decided to depend entirely on my torpedoes, and dive after getting my second one off. I therefore ordered the gun's crew below, and manoeuvred for my second torpedo.

Then came her second shot which must have narrowly missed me on the top of the conning tower, as it fell into the water only about a hundred yards over, and directly in line. However, I got my sights on and fired, gave the order to dive and slipped into the conning tower, where I was closing the hatch when there came a terrific crash. I found myself falling down the conning tower into the boat, and arrived in a dazed condition. What had happened was that the U boat's third shot had hit the conning tower.

It was a truly miraculous escape from death for although I had been struck in fourteen places by fragments of metal, some as large as a penny, none reached a vital spot, though several penetrated deeply.



*The shell that embedded itself in the conning tower of HMS E40 causing the submarine to dive to over 300 feet.*

In the meantime, the boat was just on the point of diving, and water began to pour into the hole in the conning tower. Fortunately, in spite of some obstruction from wreckage, the lower hatch was closed before much water had penetrated into the boat.

The result of this water and the flooded conning tower was that the boat became temporarily out of control, and in spite of all efforts continued to sink. This part of the North Sea is very deep,

and soon the depth gauges were at their maximum of about 150 feet and had to be shut off.

It was now impossible to tell whether we were still sinking, but evidently this was the case, as presently we struck the bottom, and word was passed forward that water was leaking in. In the meantime, compressed air had been turned on to our ballast tanks, and as the water was driven out we began to rise, but owing to our depth gauges being out of action we were unable to be certain of this, until we suddenly broke surface again.

We were evidently still close to the U boat, and both my torpedoes must have missed her, for we heard shots being fired at us again, but quickly got under water and dived away.

Two days later we arrived back safely at our base, but my submarine days were over, as I was still in hospital at the time of the Armistice, and was shortly after invalided and placed on the retired list.

A little later I met one of my old hands who had been to Harwich to assist the taking over of the German Submarine Fleet surrendered there. He had got into conversation with some of the German crews and they were amazed to hear that he belonged to E.40, which had been reported officially in Germany as sunk.

A further interesting sequel occurred when I unexpectedly received from a friend a cutting from the 'Morning Post' of 19 May 1928 which I quote:

**'Submarine Diving Record'** (by our Naval Correspondent)

The new Italian submarine Ballilla is reported during her trials to have dived to a depth of 101 metres (332 feet) and to have remained on the bottom for over an hour. This is claimed by the Italian Naval Authorities to be a world's record, but though it is a fine performance it cannot stand as such.

During the war a British submarine commanded by Lieut-Commander Guy Sharp was hit in the conning tower and her Captain was wounded. The submarine dived quickly and could not be stopped until she rested on the bottom of the sea at a depth of 343 feet. There she remained for some time and ultimately reached the surface in safety.'

Guy Sharp said (Aug '81) that they broke open a compass to loosen the compass needle to dig out the shell fragments.

### HIS FIRST COMMAND: HMS A6



A6 was a member of the first British class of submarines, although slightly larger, faster and more heavily armed than the lead ship, HMS A1. The submarine had a length of 105 feet 1 inch (32.0 m) overall, a beam of 12 feet 9 inches (3.9 m) and a mean draft of 10 feet 8 inches (3.3 m).

They displaced 190 long tons (190 t) on the surface and 206 long tons (209 t) submerged.

The A-class submarines had a crew of 2 officers and 11 ratings.



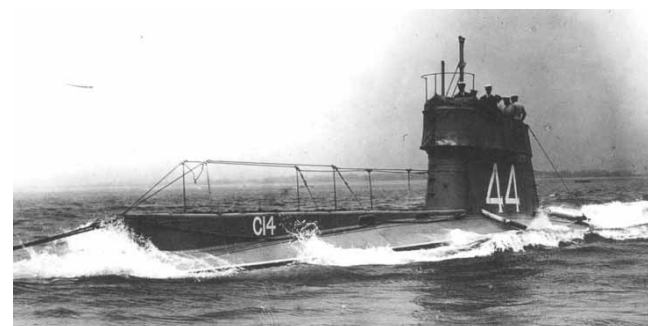
### HIS SECOND COMMAND: HMS C14

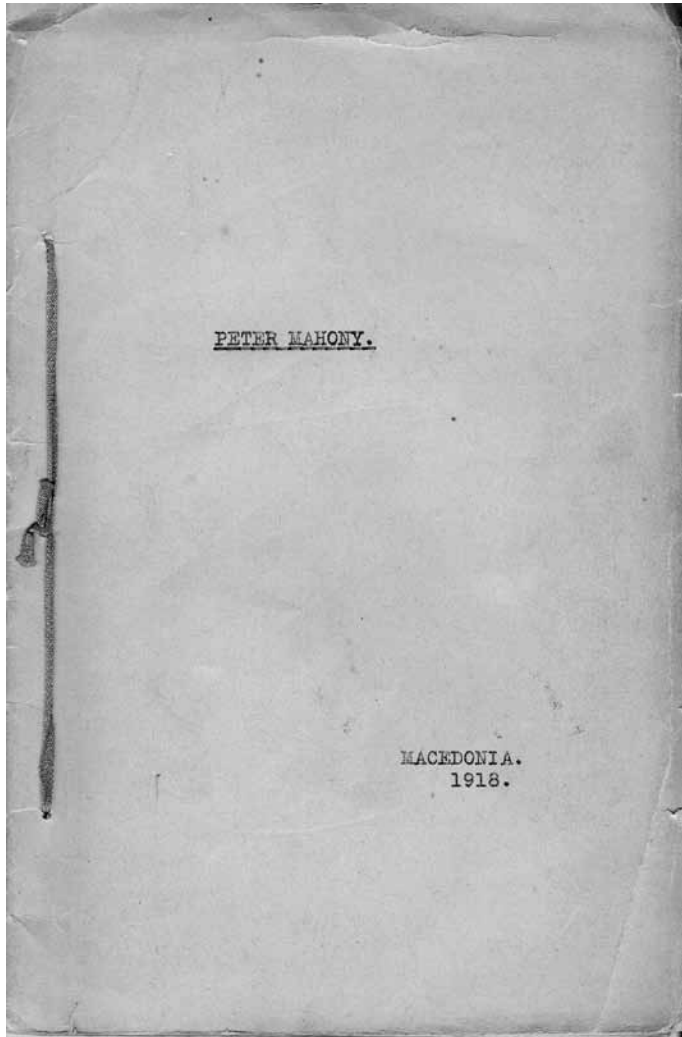


The C class was essentially a repeat of the preceding B class, albeit with better performance underwater. The submarine had a length of 142 feet 3 inches overall, (43.4 m), a beam of 13 feet 7 inches (4.1 m) and a mean draft of 11 feet 6 inches (3.5 m).

They displaced 287 long tons (292 t) on the surface and 316 long tons (321 t) submerged.

The C-class submarines had a crew of 2 officers and 14 ratings.





## Macedonia, 1918

### The Unpublished Writing of Private Peter Mahony (1892-?)

When clearing a house in Guildford, Surrey, some years ago, I found in the back of an old bureau the typed transcript of some prose and verse written by a serving soldier, stationed in Macedonia in 1918.

The prose and verse came about by a Corporal asking him what he found to say when writing home, as he said he had no difficulty in filling ten to twelve sheets of paper when he did so. It was later suggested by the Corporal that he should try a little poetry. He had never before, he informed him, attempted any but the Corporal pressed him to do so. His attempts at poetry follow the prose.

Corporal Francis Jackman (1880–1967) married Annie S. Herring in 1906 and lived at 28 Fairbridge Road, Holloway, London N in 1911 (Census) then at 7 Elm Park Road, Finchley, London N.3.

– David Nash Guildford (2018)

\* \* \* \* \*

Nearly all that is known of Private Peter Mahony is contained in a slim 22 page booklet, typed on A5 paper and tied with ribbon, from which his work has been reproduced. The typewriter used was probably operational in the 228th Brigade Headquarters Orderly Room in Macedonia where Peter was an orderly. David Nash and RGC have tried to locate Peter's descendants with no success and to promote the existence of Peter Mahony's writing with limited success. Guildford Museum has included the work in a display and the Liverpool Echo was offered it in its celebration of the 1914 anniversary.

The facts are straightforward. Peter Mahony's ancestry, like many other Liverpudlians, was Irish—at least through his father, Michael Mahony, who was born in Cork in 1867. Peter was born in Liverpool in 1892, married Elizabeth Buckley in 1928 and lived at 6 Villars Street, Liverpool. Peter had a brother Frank, also born in the early 1890s and a sister Jane born in 1894.

Front cover:  
PETER MAHONY. MACEDONIA. 1918

Title page:  
PETER MAHONY MACEDONIA  
(*In pencil:*) Francis F W Jackman, 7 Elm Park Road, Finchley,  
London N.3; 1911 28 Fairbridge Road, Holloway, London N.

page 3:  
NOTE.

The following were written by PETER MAHONY, a Private Soldier serving in the 228<sup>th</sup> Brigade Headquarter's Orderly Room in MACEDONIA during the GREAT WAR.

I had expressed surprise when he informed me that he had no difficulty in filling ten or twelve sheets of paper in his letters home, and asked him what he found to write about, with the following result.

I later suggested that he should try a little Poetry. He had never before, he informed me, attempted any, but I pressed [sic] to do so. His "attempts" at Poetry follow on after the prose.

Francis F.W.Jackman.

P.S. I am sorry to say that I have lost touch with Peter Mahony. I have written to him at the address he gave me but have received no reply.

F.F.W.J.

Dear Corporal, do not think me puffed up for what I am about to do. I know my own limitations – and honestly – have no great idea of my own ability, but you have expressed a wish that some such scribble as you read tonight might come your way, if only as a record of the way in which other fellows thought. What you read I give you a copy of with a few more sentences tacked on.

If there is anything in it which can give you any pleasure or be of any service what-ever, you are more than welcome to it for what it is worth, and may I also add that if at any time any scribble of mine can give you matter for a few lines, do not hesitate to make use of them. I claim no author's rights.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Tonight is a beautiful one. The daylight lasted until about 8.30 and the Moon was then well in the heavens, and we went straight from Sunlight to a wonderful Moonlight. I wish you could have seen it. There is a nice breeze blowing now, the crickets are singing away as hard as they can, and now and then a bird (a late one) says Goodnight to its mate, and others are chiding it for coming home late and disturbing them. Presently one of the real night birds will give evidence of his powers as a Songster, bursting out full-throated – a sheer melody of happiness and beauty.

You have heard of the glamour of an Eastern Night – well – this is pretty well East – and I can vouch, at least, for the beauty of the Macedonian Night.

Night always seems peculiarly quiet out here, the chatter of the crickets, the song of the Nightingale, the cry of the Owl (I can hear them all as I write) and the many other Night sounds which can exist only in the Wilds such as this do not break the silence – they all fit in perfectly and seem to impress it upon you. You stand drinking it all in and almost quarrel with the scheme of things that you are not a Poet, and so enable you to express all the Sights and the Sounds mean to you. They bring you Memories of the Past – Joy and Gladness, even in the sad Present, and weave an exquisite Dream of Hope for the Future.

"The Moonlight is best described by the word 'exotic', but for me there is something deeper – surer – something more of real Peace and Content in the Moonless Night – just a Sky gleaming with countless Stars, each one a unit among an innumerable Multitude, a silent yet living Witness to the Infinite, for there they hang, gazing down on the World with a passionless gaze, watching the rise and fall of Nations, the Birth and Death of Men, all passing like a pageant before them, even the very World itself they have seen changing. What was Land becoming Sea – the Sea – Land; Trees – Fossil and Rock. All these they see, and watch on – yet never changing themselves. To us of the present, a Symbol of Eternity and Infinity. To the Ages a Sign of the mutability of all things material.

So, thought leads to thought and something of the Greatness of Life enters the Soul and the Creation seems perfect. Its Harmony of Life, animate and inanimate, colour, sound and the absence of it, blend majestically and shews to the Senses the very Soul of that which we call Music."

\* \* \* \* \*

In re-writing the above I notice many inelegancies, but, except for one or two little changes, have made no alteration. Punctuation, and sometimes the words, are hard and do not quite say what is meant, but no time was spent to consider the weight and the precision of language. I repeat – if of any use you are more than welcome.

Yours, PETER.

The following was written in the course of a letter last evening, and, thinking it might be the kind of thing you wanted from me, I copied it out hurriedly. In reading it this evening I find that there is much in it which seems copied from my attempts at verse, but I assure you I quite forgot them when writing. Like all my effusions it was written without thought, just coming naturally to my pen. Mamie, having mentioned that she had spent a week-end at Benham and went straight from there to a ‘Stuffy old Office’. As a result the thought is brief – not as much made of it as could be at a serious effort, with attention paid to language. Still, perhaps you can amend any blemishes.

Yours, PETER

“I hardly know which is the worse – your case of going to a ‘Stuffy Office’ *from* the Country, or mine – living surrounded by it (Country) but only able to sneak a few odd moments, at the best, out in the open, with a perfect sky above, a lovely breeze and the picture of a landscape, stretching for miles, made of Hill and Plain, all of which you can overlook, as you are higher. For many years now my life has been spent away from Towns, except for a few months of holidays added together and I sometimes wonder how I shall ever be able to reconcile myself to the “stuffiness” of a town. I love the Sun and its Shade, the sound of breezes blowing through trees, the song of birds that I know and many I do not know, the smell of Thyme and the Pine and, indeed, all the simplicity and grandeur of life away from stuffiness, with just Nature run wild.

Well, we humans are pliable beings and can, most of us, accommodate ourselves to the circumstances we find ourselves in. So I suppose I shall manage to get my balance, but I know that all the time my mind will go wandering and will dream of hills covered with furze and fields flashing in the wind with a mad riot of colour. My ears will strain, in vain, to catch the note of a thrush

or the wild song of a nightingale and my eyes will search the skies for its numberless and changing hues, from the deep blue above to the peacock green further on and the misty grey on the horizon.

All this I will look for and find it not, but only, probably, the banality of a line of Suburban houses, and no one can say they are beautiful, certainly not from the outside.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I rise each morning with strong, wild hopes, and while the day is young, before the Sun has flung its fiercest ray across the parched Earth, my thoughts have run the gamut of my wish, and what was sweet has turned to bitterness, and breeds now, not content, but painful longing and I pray for Night, that in dark sleep I may rid myself of my pain; but even here I am defeated, for once more my mind is thronged with vision of what might be. But presently my eyes turn to the skies, lit with the beautiful light of the Moon, and meet the inscrutable gaze of the Stars and glance down upon the still Earth below, and then the Spirit of Peace grips me, my pain is gone, is succeeded by indescribable Joy, and then comes Sleep in the midst of my Joy.

So it is that I once more hail the morning with delight, for after comes the Night.

#### “THE THINGS OF A CHILD” 12.9.18

I often heard in my young days that the time was approaching when I should “put away the things of a Child” and take unto myself the things of a Man. This made me somewhat sad. I did not want to put away the things of Childhood – not all of them. Some of them were very precious, and did not seem essentially childish. My relationship with the things around me, my relationship to the people around me, and my relationship to myself. I did not desire to relinquish all these, for instance, the sight of “Creeper” in its Autumn Glory, or the sight of a Flower folding up its petals at the day’s end – these sights gave me a peculiarly childish delight, which I can remember, but not reproduce. Neither did I like to think I should lose that power to wheedle out of the Grand-folk the wonderful Stories they could tell me of other lands, their animals and people. The Winter’s evening spent at the knee in a fire-lit room, the only other sound besides that gentle voice of the speaker – the inexorable ticking of the Clock – became a very dear thing.

Then my relationship to myself – Should I have to abandon



all these wonderful fancies which my childish vision was forever conjuring up? Surely not! Yet I should have known, should have realized that those who told me I must part with all these things spoke with the voice of experience – and so, slowly, but surely, their words became true.

I found that with the years I was irrevocably putting behind me the things of a Child. I did indeed then become sad. I made no effort to keep them; I saw it would be useless. I tried to laugh away my sadness, but it remained. And then, suddenly, I saw my error. These dear things were still within my reach: they had not gone with the years, but only my childish view of them. The dying creeper still delights me, but it is a mental delight; before, it was only my eyes that were pleased, today it teaches me a truth. It shews me that there is a beauty, mellow and restful, at the end of Life just as there is the beauty of vigour and splendour at the height of Life.

Even the words of the old folk would teach me something if they were here. Their serenity and peace, after the heat of the day of life, would teach me to look with confidence to the dusk of my own earthly days. My dreams – they are still mine, are as kaleidoscopic as ever, the children of my fancy, ever at my bidding to fill the vacant hour. They are children of my own making, in a Realm where I alone am King, and where all do my Will. There I sometimes go, from the stress of the present, and wander at large among my subjects, and when I come back to realities I am always the better for my journey, for these people of mine are wise. They show me how much good the Kind Word can do – to him who utters it and to him who hears. They teach me that “High Endeavour” is the true path to content. If, at times, it is like climbing a steep rock, and we miss our hold – well, up and forward! The Guide is still with us.

So it might be to the End. May I keep on putting things behind me, in this sense, for I am not losing, but gaining?

The Memory of the Past is mine, and the Present is with me, with its new adventures over old, familiar paths, broadening and quickening my spirits until, at last, I enter upon the greatest Adventure of all.

\* \* \* \* \*



*War Graves in Brookwood Cemetery, Surrey. Photo by Maggie Lye.*

#### “THE VOICE OF THE GUNS” 21.9.1918

For many days, the rumour of battle floated round us and then there came from the West the rumble of many Guns, breaking the shield of heat, the fierce rays of the sun had formed. Dully the sound smote our ears and we whispered one to another “The Guns – do you hear them?” or murmured unfeelingly “Somebody’s getting it!” and hardly cared whether or not it were friend or foe, though we would rather it were the latter.

So, again and again, during the glare of the day the sound of the Guns broke in upon us and lasted on until evening – and with the setting of the sun their volume grew more insistent, and broke the quiet of the evening’s glory. The sun threw its last lingering gleam, sudden yet wistful, into the Western sky, and, almost immediately, night was come and with it a gentle breeze which cooled all things and brought to our hearts the sweet longing for a future mapped out from the past. With the night came yet again the voice of the Guns, loud and peremptory, forcing their utterance upon the ear. It was as though the Guns, on their part, had been fanned into more feverish life by the night breeze and the ears on theirs, as though they, now released from the day’s garishness, were once more able to fulfil their function. With this quickening, the message of the Guns reached us – their voices no longer a few dull notes amongst a multitude in the world of sound, but strong and vibrant, telling of strength and purpose, a symbol of ideals and passions, kaleidoscopic in its almost infinite variety.

“Justice and Right above Might” they cried, and we forgot that it was Might that spoke thus. Then the tone changed and it was the battle cry of a man, man primeval, fighting for his right and his name and all that he held dear. Yet again the voice changed and it was the paean of Victory on the lips of one who was Conqueror, even in Death. Yet still the voice rose louder and louder, until it seemed to shriek its message of hate pitted against hate – of blood claimed for blood – “Vengeance and Death” they cried, and the cry shattered the centuries, and left men bereft of the veneer of countless years, swayed by their own passions – hate and lust, valour and nobleness – a battle within a battle, of inherent wrong with instinctive right. The mind was dazed and the physical body shuddered at the spectacle presented to the mind.

Presently the voices seemed to lose much of their fierce intensity, became less grim in their insistency, less often did they break the night’s calm. When they spoke there seemed to be a whole world of difference in their tones. All the sorrow and suffering and prayers of a War-ridden world now seemed to find speech in the voice of the Guns and I dreamed that these voices, full of agony and petition, were borne through space to the feet of God. With the thought there came to me glimpses of the pain and suffering left by War in the wake of the Guns. I gazed upon the faces of the Dead and the maimed and twisted shapes that not many hours back had been the perfect bodies of men. I looked into the grief-stricken eyes of parents bereaved, I saw the shadow of desolation cross the features of a young wife, and in the eyes of a maiden I glimpsed the hopelessness of a Love unrealized. I head the patter of children’s feet and the lisping call of the child for one never known. Scene after scene, but ever of sorrow, flashed before my mind, till I would fain have questioned God why all this should be. But, ’ere my thoughts could frame themselves, I saw that mine was not the right to question – I could only trust and with my eyes raised to the night’s starry splendour, I joined the tiny atom of my voice to those loud, but now pleading voices of the Guns.

\* \* \* \* \*

20.8.18

The poet, so men say, is born – not made, and it seems they speak the truth, but it is a second birth, that of the Spirit, and it is prolonged and painful, or, at least, to me it is. Not easily can I find that simple diction which describes the homely, or that simpleness

and power to see something beyond the material form and colour of flowers and trees, that power which creates from them another world in which there is life just as in our own; which can see a sensitiveness even in the humble daisy. I cannot gaze upon the star-lit Heavens and find on my lips the words which can express the almost unconscious thoughts which throng my mind. If I try to utter them, my fairy world is shattered.

The merest puff of wind comes to me as a friend with a light caress and away again; the lull which follows being its whisper as it tells me some secret. I cannot tell you what, unless it is that we should be like itself – lightsome, buoyant, carrying ever within us that joy of Soul which alone can give up the secret of life. The fierce wind, too, and the lashing rain, seize me and satisfy some craving – but while one marvels at their very fury, wondering how anything can survive their passage, one smiles at the knowledge that the morrow will come as though they never had been.

Mine is not the power to give forth a passionate cry of love, so intense that it burns the very Soul. My love is different from that. It burns me up, but leaves me silent in my very joy. Perhaps it is because of that love that I cannot tell my thoughts on other things, for they are all lost in it.

The burning light of day or the quiet peacefulness of night, the mighty host of Stars or the Moon’s ethereal light, the music of birds or the sight of wooded hills – they all call to me and irresistibly I am drawn. I listen and look, but what I hear and what I see I cannot tell. It is as though I had been told half a secret and left to guess the rest, and I cannot.

It is that which is painful, the half knowledge and the continual striving to express something heard or seen but which is intangible – elusive.

Perhaps, after all, the veil which guards these secrets from prying spirits has not been lifted. The knowledge, however, that the secrets are there, is sufficient to inspire a lasting desire for possession. If we pull long enough at the cords of the veil and, in the right spirit, it may part and then – well, then we shall have embarked on a sea that has no bounds, whose depths and shallows are never known, for what is depth for one is shallow for another; but if the Soul can truly sound its *own* depths and its *own* shallows, then it may truthfully cry “I have lived and found life good.”

\* \* \* \* \*

## “DEJECTION”

A heaviness oppresses me this night  
That presages the advent of some grief.  
Just as the sky, without the kind stars' light,  
O'ercast by heavy rolling clouds, reef after reef,  
Betokens some fierce storm still gathering strength  
Before it breaks in fury through some fair land's length,  
So o'er me hangs this secret anxiousness  
That fills the night with deadly irksomeness,  
That makes the cry of birds seem but the Knell  
Of sorrow yet to come, and taints the well  
Of comfort offered by those silent friends  
Our books; and to the sound of laughter lends  
A harshness, searing thine own tuneless Being.  
My Soul! Why dost thou harbour such a foe,  
Since with the morrow's dawn, when Sol shall throw  
His first bright beam across the waking Earth,  
Thou, too, shalt waken and thyself shalt girth  
About with aims of high endeavour,  
Fighting manfully the foes that gather round thee.  
So, at closing day, shall peace be found,  
And paeans for thy latest Victory sound.  
List! The hush of Eve hath fallen,  
Calling man to leave his labour,  
Bidding him to be not foreign  
To the rapture and the power  
Of this moment, wrapping nature  
In a deep calm peace, a treasure  
She will gladly share with thee  
If thou be not blind – but see.

## “YOUTH”

I have dreamed the dreams of Youth  
And my dreams are dead!  
Must I now face life's great booth  
And on husks be fed,  
As the multitude before  
That have trod the road  
Of the might have been, heart sore;  
Who have borne the load  
Of o'erwhelming care and grief,  
Till at length, worn out,  
They have hailed Death's great relief?

\* \* \*

Ah! Those dreams! Sweet Boyhood's dreams!  
Yet withal so real,  
For the young heart grows and deems  
It has seen the seal  
That must close the Book of Life  
When its end is gained.  
We beholdeth not the strife  
Of the battle strained  
And hard fought, till every hope  
Has been doubly slain;  
Nor the wearied hearts that grope  
Amidst Hope's remains.

\* \* \*

'Tis a lesson life must teach,  
But too hard for Youth.  
The maturest minds may preach,  
But Youth laughs, forsooth,  
For his dream, like snow-capped peaks  
'Gainst a warm blue sky

Is alluring, calm, and speaks  
Not of dangers nigh.  
To achieve his dreams is life!  
So, sweet Youth, dream on,  
'Ere dull care and age are ripe  
And thy Youth gone.

\* \* \*

I love the sky so wide and blue,  
The hills below and their changing hue,  
And the wind that frolics between the two,  
Bearing the scent of fragrant thyme  
And teasing the tall and stately pine –  
But they are nothing compared with you.

Your eyes are the skies that are so blue,  
Their light and shadows are ever new,  
Nor fairest land boasts so fair a view!  
Thy tresses the scent of thyme combine  
With glory greater than any pine!  
No! nought so wondrous, so fair as you!

## “SEPARATION”

My eyes see not the things that are beside me,  
But travel over endless miles of land and sea  
And rest on thee.

My thoughts are not upon the present day or hour,  
But glance back to the Past or forward to the days to be  
And dream of thee.

My heart grows weary in dull Waiting's lone, lone vale  
And weary will remain until the journey's end,  
And I'm with thee.

### “WAR AND FAITH”

‘Tis senseless folly  
That seals men’s fate,  
That makes them wholly  
The pawns of Hate,  
That gives their bodies to pain  
Untold, or offers them slain  
To that grim Deity, the God of War,  
To whom life’s latest gasp, the bloody gore  
Of mangled, mutilated limbs bring glory!  
Those dear bodies. Ah! The horror of their story!  
Hope, Joy, Love, with one fell swoop snatched from them,  
The cups that hold all life snapped at the stem.  
‘Twould seem so to the stricken heart;  
But Faith, O Lord, Thy Comforter, a part  
More fitted to the Scheme Divine can teach:  
How suffering, bravely borne, is but a means to reach  
The nobler destiny that waits all Souls  
That live Life’s span, beholding nobler goals,  
And reckon not a flower sprinkled path  
The Royal Road to Life’s great aftermath.

### “REMEMBRANCE”

The Summer skies,  
Two laughing eyes,  
A cloud, which rosy dawn has tinted,  
Lips, where loveliness is printed,  
The windblown grass,  
The rustling trees  
Are steps that pass  
With Summer’s breeze.  
The song of birds as they rejoice,  
The scent of flowers in the air,  
Recall the music of a voice  
And joyous moments, now too rare.

### “DUSK”

The evening breeze  
As it strays along  
Gently fanning mighty trees,  
The shrill, sweet song  
Of a homing bird –  
That is all; nor else is heard.  
A dull red glow  
In a dark’ning sky,  
Heaven’s lamps begin to show  
Like fairy lights, swung high,  
In honour to Day’s Queen,  
The Night; nor else is seen.

### “PRO PATRIA”

A room dim lit at sundown’s hour,  
A woman holding a faded flower,  
Musing the tale of a simple mound,  
Of a Life well spent, and a greater found.

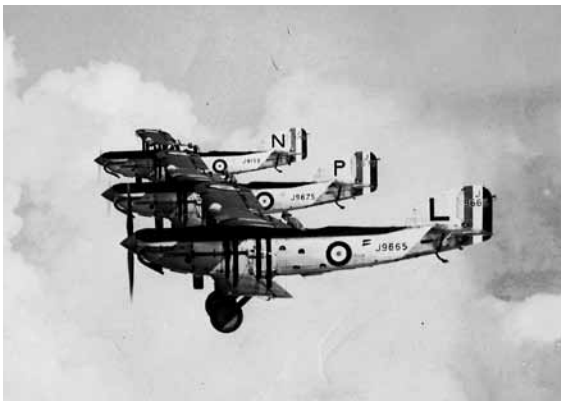


Samuel James Clark  
(1907–1971)

Photograph by Sheena Clark  
(1909–1990)



The Clark coat of arms



SJC and two fellow airmen flew from Aden to Addis Ababa  
for Haile Selassie's Coronation.

In the photograph – No.8 (B) Squadron – from Khormaksar –  
3 Fairey IIIIF's (Napier Lion XIA engines) flying in formation

## The Coronation of Haile Selassie in 1930 – A Memoir<sup>I</sup>

by Samuel James Clark (1907–1971)

All photographs are by him unless otherwise stated

### ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

At the Coronation of Ras Tafari (Emperor Haile Selassie) at Addis Abbaba [Ababa], Sunday, 2 November, 1930, luck was on our side throughout the Coronation as we managed before the ceremony to obtain superb vantage points on balconies and rooftops above the procession, and at street level, allowing us to capture the jostling throng of soldiers, bandsmen, tribal chiefs and tribesmen. Later we photographed the Emperor from only yards away: quite a coup for amateur *snappers*.



Abyssinian Mounted Band in the procession



Tribal chiefs on their way to the Coronation ceremony

The capital was bursting with visitors for the Coronation: the sense of excitement and jubilation was tangible as we photographed the Emperor, his courtiers and our fellow dignitaries swarming about looking important: some were looking lost! The sense of occasion to the initiated was a little Biblical. After all, Psalms 68:31 prophesied that “Princes would come out of Egypt, and Ethiopia would stretch forth her hands unto God”. Future generations will judge that for themselves. We chatted briefly to an English writer, Evelyn Waugh, who was covering the event.



The Ceremony was interminably long with much of it unintelligible and unpredictable. The forty-nine bishops and priests made the most of their part as so many variations on a religious theme were fed to us: psalms, prayers, masses, chants of all kinds, scriptural readings, oaths, kisses of peace, often apparently in an archaic language, Ghiz. Clouds of incense filled the air. Seven days and nights before the Coronation the clergy chanted the nine Psalms of David in relays of seven.

Latterly, I have discovered that the preparations for this event included tarmacking key streets in the capital, installing electric lights and the building of fences to hide primitive dwellings on the Coronation route. Arches were also constructed through which the Emperor, Empress and the Imperial Bodyguard would travel under the usual trimmings of celebration – flags, insignia and bunting. The huge influx of foreigners into the capital led to a serious shortage of accommodation. Official guests numbered about 750 and we were seated in a huge hanger-like auditorium by St George’s Church where the thrones were placed. The Emperor’s was painted gold and red while the Empress’s was in gold and blue. Our official representative, the Duke of Gloucester, unveiled a tribute to the former emperor, Emperor Menelik II, in the form of a gilded statue of the Emperor riding a horse.



*SJC, on the left in Aden, with ‘Tiger’ Harris. Photo by ‘Ginger’ Smythe.*

When the Coronation started, according to a transcript I have obtained, the chief priest, Abuna Kyrilos, declaimed: “Ye princes and ministers, ye nobles and chiefs of the army, ye soldiers and people of Ethiopia, and ye doctors and chiefs of the clergy, ye professors and priests, look ye upon our Emperor Haile Selassie the First, descended from the dynasty of Menelik the First, who was born of Solomon and of the Queen of Sheba, a dynasty perpetuated without interruption from that time to King Sehale Selassie and to our times.”

Five hours later, after interminable oaths by the new Emperor, Selassie’s fourteen-year old son was sworn in: cannons fired outside deafened everyone inside and cheers rang out. But it was not over as the Empress had to be sworn in and crowned too with the requisite reading from the Psalm of David: “Kings’ daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.” To which she responded, in between, amid lots of crown exchanges and presents of jewels, bowing, anthems and ululations.





*Local tribesmen joining the procession*

The newly crowned pair then processed around the church followed by palm carrying family and retinue, only to continue to St George's Church for another mass, eventually issuing out to the waiting crowd. It was a fascinating spectacle but by then I must admit that my thoughts were drifting to the joyful prospect of flying back to Aden.



*The Emperor (white topee) with Court officials, Addis Ababa*



#### ADEN TO GIZA: SOOTHSAYING NEXT TO THE PYRAMIDS

[Egypt] has more wonders in it than any other country in the world and provides more works that defy description than any other place.  
– Herodotus

Early in the morning on Tuesday, 30th June 1931 we flew our Fairey III'Fs to Cairo in formation: 'Tiger' Harris as usual breaking away en-route to cartwheel and generally exhibit; Ginger 'The Lens' Smythe was clicking away on his Air Ministry camera – 'very hush-hush you know'. Tiger, looking every inch the future of the Royal Air Force, banked determinedly to take us down, together, more or less.

After a much needed wash and brush up, we joined the snorting, spitting camels that Staff had laid on, as a gesture of inter-base courtesy for our much vaunted trip. Even then, the pyramids and the Sphinx were host to clutches of tourists, vendors and soothsayers.

Our mini-caravan bobbed its way across the desert to the hissing and swishing of these powerful animals. Arab head gear temporarily adorned the heads of my compatriots but their mind-set was decidedly western. This thought forced me to invoke Mustafa's image, and that of his wife Feirouz and their children. I don't think T. E. Lawrence had an Arab blood brother.<sup>2</sup> Even the silent rendering of that phrase dripped with more than a sense





*Samuel about to go up-country to El-Quaad, 1930*

of mischief, even disloyalty. To ally oneself with a native, ritually mingle blood and stay as a guest would be a mystery too far for my fellow airmen: quite *infra dig*.

The flight from Crater [Aden] and our subsequent visit to the Sphinx and Pyramids led us to an unforeseen denouement. Airmen are creatures of training honed by instinct and not given to, excuse the pun, ‘flights of fancy’ but the soothsayers changed my perception of the world. I have had to accept the possibility of ghosts in the machine to hijack a common sentiment.<sup>3</sup>

After a tour of the site, Abdul-Latif, our guide and translator, flagged up the presence of a group of hawk-nosed men sitting cross-legged in the sand. They were the soothsayers<sup>4</sup> whose ancestors’ predictions, over the aeons, had swayed the fate of nations. Instead of entrails, these men used sticks to draw fortunes and they were attracting large numbers of customers.

“Flies to the honeypot,” jibed Ginger, as we sauntered over to the spectacle of tourists being fleeced.

“يدنفاً,” greeted the most senior as he rose to salaam, the ritual gesture of respect, a low bow with his right hand touching his forehead.

“مالسلا مكيلع و,” responded Abdul, as he invited us to reciprocate with a salaam.<sup>5</sup> We obliged.

Money changed hands as we went forward in turn, sceptical to a man. Ginger was first and unusually quiet on his return. Abdul looked concerned but eventually installed me in front of the senior soothsayer who was certainly dressed for the part in full Arab gear.



*Barbara Fay and Richard 1945*

He started by scrutinizing my palm just like the famed Gypsy Queen Mrs Gobi back home. But there the similarity ended. Various images appeared in the sand: I was by then full of anticipation gripped by such professional Arab theatre. Abdul was clearly impressed by this desert oracle as he translated the succinct verdict.

“He says you will marry a woman with hair darker than Ginger’s, that you will have a boy and a girl. You will fight in a war to come and live a prosperous life. But you will die quite young.” The woman is my wife Sheena, titian-haired with torquoise eyes, and the girl is Barbara Fay; the boy is Richard. For two years now I have been dying from leukaemia so my longevity is going to be quite short too.

On re-grouping, we naturally teased out each others’ futures. Ginger was clearly trying to pass his experience off as a joke but eventually he confided in us.

“The resident prophet is a washout,” he complained. “After all the salaams, he took my hand, glanced at it, turned it over then closed it, saying ‘there is nothing to see’. Even refused to take my money.”

A week after we returned to Aden, Ginger took off at 6 am and crashed straight back down a minute later.



*Ginger's Faery III F at Daala, Aden 1931*



*A riot in Aden put down by Samuel who was leading a detachment when he was hit by a large rock and concussed, Aden c.1936*

The psychology of colonial domination clashed totally with my mystical leanings. How could the incidental racism of my compatriots ever be replaced by a keen desire to discover anything meaningful about Egyptian culture and the Egyptians' world view. My son, Richard, told me recently that after an Any Questions Programme in 1968, he and his girl-friend, Susan Howard, had been invited by Malcolm Muggeridge<sup>6</sup> to drinks afterwards with selected guests, waited on by the producer and other BBC staff. The first question from the newly appointed Rector of Edinburgh University, after polite chit-chat, was about my politics and Egypt. Richard generalized about my having populist conservative leanings and a mystical side evidenced by my harmless hobby – collecting grimoires.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, Muggeridge was fascinated and

they spent the late evening mulling over the influence of fathers on sons. Well, well. The man hated by the public for his anti-monarchist views dwelling on a stranger's profile. But, of course, he had been to Egypt in about 1927. The blood brother revelation intrigued him and he expressed a desire to meet me sometime. That would have been most interesting.

I had joined my squadron in the 1920s after the concept of air control had been established in the Middle East. Its success in Transjordan and Iraq led to its extension in the Aden Protectorate. The Afghanistan frontier and the tribes of Waziristan were attacked from 1919 to 1939. In 1925 Waziri dissidents were bombed for 54 days after which tribal leaders agreed to make peace.<sup>8</sup>

In 1928, following inter-tribal disorder in Afghanistan, we were involved in the evacuation of 586 Brits, mainly women and children, from the Legation in Kabul in an exceptionally severe winter with hazardous conditions flying over mountains and hostile territory. The puffs of rifle shot from Waziris dotted the terrain below. We were instructed that if we had to make a forced landing to pretend to be dumb as this would obligate the chief to offer us shelter. It was most fortunate this half-baked idea never had to be tested. Oh, if it was a desert scenario you had to hold onto the central tent pole to be saved. Ye gods! This was the Empire at its best: subduing unruly tribesmen and safeguarding the Empire. Indeed, this has been a Western hobby for millennia – from Alexander the Great onwards.

Egypt was a fascinating place despite the arrogance with which the colonizers treated the Egyptians who were expected to move aside on walkways if approaching their 'betters'. It has been very difficult to adjust to life in Bournemouth after a constant round of amusement: drinking, smoking, eating such exotic fare as shark (a bit like pork) and octopus; sports of all kinds – fencing, football, rugby, hockey, cricket and sand yachting. Swimming, with the daughter of the French Ambassador, my old girl-friend, is an activity I miss greatly in warm water. I have not been in the sea since I returned in 1945. My key interest, apart from music, and reading Dickens and the Russian authors, is now UFOs which offer a tantalizing subject and a welter of conflicting assertions.

THE BASEMENT Wednesday September 1962

The soothsayers were proved right. I married a Titian haired beauty with turquoise eyes who bore me two children, a boy and a girl. Ginger died that fateful morning and I believe many of the other men's fortunes and misfortunes came true. I don't like to dwell too much on those Cairo and Aden days even when we are reminiscing at the RAF club in Sea Road, Boscombe, but the shades of the departed lounge around us.

Sheena, like many women, embraced spiritualism after the still birth-a girl-and she went on a mission of some sort. The house became filled with dark eyed, dark haired, dark skinned ladies – some Indian [one was Parsee], another Singhalese [married to an Englishman], another Iranian [distant relation of the Shah]. I did object to my daughter being taught to table rap by Mrs Parrett, whose insufferable pride niggled: her daughter was marrying an earl apparently. Mind you, Ruth was a beauty.

Intermingling with the *spiritual ones* were more general *needy ones*: Danny, the trans-sexual cross-dresser or whatever you call them; old man Symmonds, the Jewish millionaire who kept trunks of pre-war moth-eaten vests and pants waiting for the price to rise; Michael, found in the toilet at Boscombe Crescent, always bleating on about 'the psychiatrist who stole his wife and child', an old Etonian it was later discovered; Mrs Eden, the clairvoyant; some mad earl whose face and title I forget, always flashing his House of Lords credentials; the man with the glass eye who bounced it on the floor; the Tibetans; the VIP Hungarian refugee, always receiving 'visitors' at all hours and the list groweth. Give me strength: we should change the house name to 'Menagerie Manor'.

Today, I unpacked my latest addition to the collection: a nineteenth century grimoire.<sup>8</sup> These lustrous artefacts are another route, I suppose, to Sheena's quest but more earth-centric perhaps, more about the attempt to enrol the power of man and nature for human ends. Interest in this shadowy world of ritual and ceremony would indicate belief in the afterlife. Not a bit. However, the basement episode of last night, as Sheena now calls it, takes a bit of explaining.

The basement bedroom leads straight onto the terrace. Our four poster backs onto the end wall with a clear view of the room leading to the French doors. We said our goodnights after discussing the latest on our terminally ill solicitor friend, Mr George Harding. Sheena had been to see him that morning at Douglas House

Hospice where he had sadly ended up. George had a strong belief he would rejoin Edwina, his recently deceased wife, and promised Sheena he would say goodbye to her when he died.

At 3 am the French doors flew open with an almighty bang. We sat bolt upright. Then a blinding white light roared down the length of the room straight at us. We ducked. Histrionic Harding indeed. Later in the morning we received the news that Mr George Harding had died in his sleep. Sheena asked for the time of death. 3 am came the reply from a slightly puzzled son.

## ENDNOTES

1. Diary of Samuel James Clark: Tuesday, 30 June 1931. Written in Cairo and updated in 1970, the year before he died.
2. Blood brothers pricked their fingers, then mingled their blood, and they each together made a life – long promise to love and care for each other as blood brother until death. ... and that they actually did do a simple blood-brothering ceremony. See: '*Blood-brothers: a ritual of friendship and the construction of the imagined barbarian in the middle ages*'. Klaus Oschema, Journal of Medieval History, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2006, pp. 275–301.
3. Sam adopted and added this expression when he was revising the text. It comes from British philosopher Gilbert Ryle's pithy take on Rene Descartes' mind-body dualism quoted from his book *The Concept of Mind* 1949. It depicts separate activities for the body and the mind, separate but simultaneous: "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" which Ryle believes is a category mistake.
4. Soothsayers, seers, claimed to be able to foretell events or predict the future. *The Edinburgh Review* by Sydney Smith (1869) "In one district alone, there were 777 'soothsayers and astrologers' by profession." (Vol. ii. pp. 209–10.)
5. "Wa 'Alaykum as-Salaam (والسلام عليكم) meaning "and upon you be peace". Arabic salām (سَلَام).
6. Malcolm Muggeridge (1903–1990).
7. Grimoires are textbooks of magic which usually include instructions on how to create magical objects like talismans and amulets, how to perform magical spells, charms and divination and also how to summon or invoke supernatural entities such as angels, spirits, and demons. Traditionally, the book itself is believed to possess magical powers. Examples of Grimoires: The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King; Le Solide Trésor des Merveilleux Secrets de la Magie Naturelle et Cabalistique du Petit Albert traduit excitement sur l'original latin qui a pour titre: Alberti Parvi, Lucii libellus de mirabilibus naturae arcanis, enrichi de plusieurs figures Mystérieuse; La Magic Naturelle, Ou Le Grimoire; Henry Cornelius Agrippa's Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy and Geomancy.
8. 1925 – the first independent air action of any importance and scale, known as 'Pink's War' after RAF commander R.C.M. Pink.
9. Barrett, Francis, *The Magus or Celestial Intelligencer; Being A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY IN THREE BOOKS*, 1801.

# Ruth's War

by Ruth Armley (1923– )

## AN APPRECIATION BY RGC

Ruth, like many of her generation, are often very modest about their lives and their achievements so I shall be delighted to sing her praises. The course of her life was influenced by her gender and family fortunes which as she describes below were affected badly by the death of her father. Until very recently women suffered greatly from lack of educational opportunity and intellectually inclined women frequently failed to follow career paths their intelligence should have dictated. Ruth seems to be one of those women.

I first met Ruth at Summerdale, a small cottage, near Hindhead in Surrey in the 1970s when Julie Kaufmann took Sue and myself there. According to Ruth, it was bought for £3000 and the last time it was sold, in these inflationary times, fetched over £500,000. The house was filled with beds for the large number of children which had resulted from her second marriage to Len Armley. Her first marriage to Felix Kaufmann produced three children Julie, Michael and Tamara of whom only the first two have survived. Altogether there are nine surviving children 'all of whom are wonderful'. There was an intellectual buzz about the place centred around her and her old friend, Gerhard Rosenberg, who was staying there at the time. He was Ruth's much loved friend who, living nearby in Hampstead, took Julie to school and helped in many other ways. On our visit, Gerhard, in a strong European accent, was engaged in a discussion of *entropy* but no one could remember the exact term!

Apparently Gerhard went to New Zealand with his wife and two sons. He was an architect and had a good job there – something to do with town planning – but his wife came back to England saying she objected to him giving free lessons to the local youth ('filthy natives' she called them). He married his son's nursemaid, but died when he was still fairly young.



After reading Claire Tomalin's *Charles Dickens A Life*, I mentioned Charles Dicken's treatment of his mother to Ruth which elicited:

'Dicken's mother poor soul! Mothers are never remembered for what they have done, all the willing sacrifices, but rather for what they have not done. My maternal mistakes are quite grave ... but never mind. My Armley family however don't seem to have noticed my mistakes and if they have, they never mention them.'

In fact, Ruth, an avid reader, has always worked tirelessly for her large extended family and strikes me as a very grounded, centred person with a great zest for life. Her war service at such a young age speaks volumes about her bravery. Many of Ruth's memories are painful and I very much appreciate her persisting with her contribution to *Harmonia*.

## RUTH'S EARLY MEMORIES

My Mother was a twin but her twin brother died at birth. My childhood was quite lonely despite having two elder sisters and two brothers. My Father died when I was about ten month's old, but I have an early memory of him leaning over my cot.

I overheard my Aunts saying what an awful mistake I was, that I should never have been born. My eldest sister Kathleen, actually my half-sister, was sixteen years older than me, my half-brother Jack was twelve years older, then came Marjorie, my sister who was eight years older and Geoffrey, four years older. It is very difficult to say how things were after my Father died but my Mother had to take on a lot of work to finance us: typing manuscripts; working as a stenographer in the law courts; part-time secretary for a business man in London. There was no welfare state then.

There was little time for cuddles and story-telling and my sister Marjorie couldn't stand the sight of me; my brother Geoff didn't get friendly till we're in our early teens and then it was too late. He went to war and I met Felix. I had a perfect hideaway when I was small: my Mother had what she called her flower arranging room. Today we would call it a utility room and I used to hide in there with my books and a candle: what a fire risk I was. ... I was sent to my aunt in Bristol every school holiday, taken to Paddington and put in the care of the guard, from the age of 4! Then I was met by my Great Uncle at Temple Meads, and taken to Clifton in Uncle Walshe's pony and trap. The pony was called Jack and I loved him. It wasn't an unhappy childhood, but there were no friends ... because friends meant return entertaining and there was not the

money for anything except the barest necessities. Invitations were declined, there were no holidays (except to Bristol). However, our home was rather grand and my Mother strived to keep standards that my Father would have wanted. She didn't leave that house until she had repaid my Father's debts and rented a modest house in Mortlake. I was then eleven years old and we had electricity for the first time.

During my childhood we still had a maid, and an elderly woman I called Nanny, who was supposed to look after me...but was usually asleep. She had been employed by my Father to look after the children and Mother didn't have the heart to get rid of her...I think they came to a mutual understanding: she had bed and board, and I had attention of sorts. We had a lovely dining room ... with the most beautiful chandelier. One of the maid's duties was to stand on the dining table and take down the crystal pendants, wash and polish them and hang them back in place. Her name was Bertha. She used to pad the table with newspaper, provide me with a bucket of soapy water, lift me up and make me do it.

#### THE WAR YEARS

Then came my teenage years, working at London University as a lab assistant to pay for the Physiology, Anatomy and Physics courses I was taking when there were no student grants. Felix, my future husband, was attending many of the same lectures.

I remember sitting in a cold passage in 1940, waiting for the raids to start. Here they come. German bombers with their distinctive heavy throb. A distant boom then we start counting: next one more muffled, so we reckon that went in the Thames; another a little nearer; the next one will be on or near us. Suddenly all was noise and smoke and confusion and, on instruction, I was running for my ambulance. There had been a direct hit on a surface shelter that should have provided safety for the occupants of a nearby block of flats. Scrabbling through bricks and cement we discovered no one was left alive; then we were instructed by the hospital team to gather up what we could: limbs, flesh and put what we could in baskets for another team to try and identify those poor people. We had a quick look round to see if anyone needed an ambulance, saw two little children about 7 or 8 years old, who were covered in blood and screaming. The blood wasn't theirs, fortunately, but I took them into hospital just in case of injuries.

Floodlights were trying to pick out the bombers, then several

other bombs fell that night in my area. More frightened and injured people had to be given emergency first aid and were then taken to hospital. The skies lightened and another day dawned, and after putting in my report, I went home for a few hours sleep. That was one of the worst incidents. I remember going to another surface shelter, near the river, hit from the river side, where people couldn't get out: most were drowned.

The London raids started that December and when it was quiet in Sheen I was sent up to London to do what I could. There were so many incidents, so much confusion, such cheerfulness in the face of terror. Every time I drove past St. Paul's I was heartened to see it still standing; it was a little battered and the few fires were quickly brought under control. I also discovered I was pregnant at that time. Facing my mother was more terrifying than any air raid. Driving, when the bombs were dropping, gave me an added fear of harming my child. I never knew whether to wear my tin helmet on my head or my tummy.

One night a landmine (on a parachute) got caught on Chiswick Bridge. We were sent to evacuate all the houses within a certain distance from the bomb. It was a horrible feeling to drive past the bridge to see the bomb hanging there suspended only by its black parachute. We managed to get all the people, including my Mother, sister and baby nephew, into the local cinema and churches. The army came in the morning and defused the bomb.

I was still ambulance driving and pregnant when Felix, who was interned on the Isle of Man, sent me a letter suggesting I went to see his Mother. I did and she interrogated me about my boy friends if any, and could someone other than her beloved Felix be the father? Julie was born during a rather nasty air raid, which didn't exactly put me in a state of calm and relaxation, and after two weeks I was back with my ambulance. Felix was released from the internment camp when Julie was 14 months old, and I mistakenly thought my troubles were over. However, I was very soon pregnant again and we married 6 months before Tamara was born. It was a Register Office wedding and a quick trip to the police station to sign on as an enemy alien. My wedding present was a *mug shot*, my fingerprints were taken and I was given an Aliens Card, along with a list of instructions on how a good enemy alien should behave, but with very scant advice as to how to get my British nationality restored: it took 4 years! Life became extremely difficult with no money, except a little that Felix gave me, air raids and Felix always

absent from the scene. There was no help taking the children down three flights of stairs from an upstairs London flat, when the bombs were dropping.

I became very depressed and even visiting my Mother in Sheen became too difficult. In addition, I had to report to the local police station every time I left the district and it would sometimes take two hours to be seen by a not very friendly police officer. Then it was time to return to Hampstead, where I had to do a repeat performance at the police station there. My mother-in-law came to visit and to remonstrate with me about looking after Felix well and keeping his clothes moth-free and repaired when necessary! My best friend was my father-in-law, Bruno Kaufmann, who loved me, thought that Felix was behaving badly, and introduced me to literature. He gave me back my battered sense of humour and babysat now and then. My other great friend during that time was Gerhard Rosenberg.

## Brenda's War

*by Brenda Sharp*

I was eight years old when the war started. It was expected that Gosport, where I lived, would be an early target for bombing as it housed the Naval Victualling Yard for the Navy together with Priddy's Hard which is the Armament Depot. On 1 September, two days before the declaration of war, all schools in the town were closed and an immense plan commenced to evacuate all children from the town, one of which was me!

Gosport Railway Station, then still operating, had trains running continuously. We were assembled, one school at a time. We each had a label, as in luggage label, tied to our button holes. We all carried the little square box which housed our gas mask which we were able to carry and then an issue of one brown paper carrier which had rations for one day.

My school went to the south of Winchester which was not very far; the idea being to get all children away from a vulnerable town as soon as possible. We assembled, rather scared I think, in the local Calder Common School – all children along one side of the small hall and all local people from the village along the other side. As your name was called you went off with the village person who was next in line.

Education was half-time. Our school went half the day and the village children the other half. Schools in Gosport, which were not attacked as expected, soon became A.R.P posts or first aid posts. They were certainly not used for education for a long time.

### THE AIR RAID SHELTER

Some children drifted back to Gosport and in 1941 I came home. Lessons were in groups of ten with a teacher going to houses to set the work. A group worked in my home.

When the bombing and the blitz on Portsmouth started we went to bed in the air raid shelter, at ordinary bedtime. Our shelter was an Anderson shelter and was built far away from the house to miss any debris should the house be demolished.

It became a way of life until schools started to re-open and large air raid shelters had been built in play grounds. Always, as soon as sirens sounded, and that was often, we would file in to these shelters until the all-clear was sounded.





*Oliver Sharp*



*Oliver and Gwendolen Thayer (née Jones, 1928–2000) married in 1963 shown here in their Queensway apartment*



*HMS Aurochs. Nova Scotia, 1961.*

## Lieut. Commander Oliver Ballance Sharp (1928–2010) – a tribute

*by Richard Grenville Clark*

Oliver and Thayer will always be associated in my mind with Queensway, Bayswater, in London where they had their apartment. They loved the fact that this bustling street was ‘open’ 24 hours. It is or was the most cosmopolitan part of London and they constantly observed local routines such as the typical wealthy Saudi or Brunei family trooping into their luxury apartments in a seemingly endless stream of bearded men, women in hijabs, scores of children and servants. Recently it seems that a very wealthy Brunei family has bought up a large part of the area.

Thayer’s background in the Canadian Diplomatic Service was evident as we were fed a constant stream of nibbles and drinks. Her Canadian origin had given her a distinctive voice and a very striking demeanour. At home, she was always well groomed in a slightly formal and old-fashioned way and brilliantly hospitable. Thayer and Olly had met in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1961 when Olly’s submarine was on naval exercises with the United States Navy. Sue and I enjoyed many weekends of boozy fun in Queensway with them over the years and we became very fond of them.

Oliver was a brilliant linguist, having learned Portuguese in six weeks prior to being posted to Angola by his company after he left the navy. He loved music owning over 10,000 records housed in a room with a reinforced floor. Sometimes the BBC asked him to help supply an LP. It was never apparent if he played an instrument himself. He was married three times. Thayer and his second wife both died in their sleep.

**HMS Aurochs** (P426), commanded by Lieutenant-Commander O.B. Sharp RN from 1958 to 1962, was an Amphion-class submarine of the Royal Navy, built by Vickers Armstrong and launched 28 July, 1947. Her namesake was the aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), an extinct Eurasian wild ox ancestral to domestic cattle and often portrayed in cave art and heraldry.

Apart from the *Affray* which had been lost in an accident in 1951, *Aurochs* was the only one of her class not to be modernised. In March 1961, the submarine was among the vessels that took part in

a combined naval exercise with the United States Navy off Nova Scotia. The submarine was 89.46 metres long (293 ft 6 in) and powered by 2 diesel engines and 2 electric motors capable of a surface speed of 18.5 knots (34.3 km/h; 21.3mph) and a submerged speed of 8 knots (15 km/h; 9.2 mph). Its test depth was 350 feet (107 m). Its complement was 5 officers and 55 enlisted men. The submarine's very un-pc motto was displayed on the boat's crest: 'Excreta Tauri Sapientiam Fulgeat' which can be loosely translated as 'The excreta of a bull can fool a wise man' or even more loosely 'Bullshit baffles brains'.



*HMS Ocelot is today in the drydock at Chatham Dockyard*

From 1964 **HMS Ocelot** was Olly's subsequent submarine command. It was an Oberon-class submarine built at Chatham Dockyard and laid down on 17 November 1960. Leo<sup>1</sup> and Robbie attended its launch on the 5th May, 1962. Her namesake is the ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), a wild cat native to the southwestern United States, Mexico, Central and South America.

The submarine was 73 metres long (241 feet) and powered by 2 Admiralty Standard Range 16 VMS diesel generators, and two electric motors capable of a surface speed of 17 knots (31 km/h; 20 mph), and 12 knots (22 km/h; 14 mph) when submerged. Its complement was 6 officers and 62 enlisted sailors.

After being commissioned on the 5th of January 1964, *Ocelot* joined the Third Submarine Squadron based at HMNB Clyde at Faslane. It is known that in the first three years of commission *Ocelot* sailed over 90,000 miles engaged in exercises and trials around the Clyde and Londonderry areas as well as in the Mediterranean, and in 1965 the Baltic. During the 1960s *Ocelot*, like many of the other O-Boats, was heavily involved in trailing submarine equipment, acting as a target for aircraft and assisting ship trials and training. *Ocelot* particularly contributed to important work testing Mark 24 torpedoes. It is also known that *Ocelot* carried out NATO exercises during this period.



*Leo on board his yacht. The Hardway Sailing Club, Gosport*

Olly was a natural raconteur with a healthy intake of drink commensurate with being a 'salt'. But even Olly could be drunk under the table by the Russians. He recounted a trip to Russia when he was chief personnel officer for a huge energy company when almost every utterance at informal and even formal meetings led to a toast: "Vashe zrodovye" or "Tvoye zdorovye!", which means "To your health!", depending on the form of address.

However, a conventional toast is more complicated than a simple exhortation to drink and would have suited Olly down to the ground, while he was still standing, because it would necessitate delivering a short story or anecdote. That is then capped by a playful or paradoxical denouement with a request to toast in favour of that conclusion.



*Leo with their mother, Olive Longair Sharp, née Thomson (1890–1972)*

1. Leonard William Descarrieres Sharp (1921–) who, as a chartered electrical engineer, designed radar systems for naval ships, was Head of the Naval Division at Plessey Electronics. He is Olly's older brother. In 1946, he married Roberta Elizabeth Prothero (1926–2018). They had three children: Guy Reginald Descarrieres Sharp (1947–); Susan Elizabeth Sharp (1952–) and Roland Huedebourg Sharp (1958–).



## Female Frolics and Corridor Capers

by Barbara Compton



Barbara Compton in 1972



Barbara and her family in 2018

I was born in Manchester in 1950 and moved to Oldham in 1956, educated at Oldham Grammar School but left at 16 with a handful of GCSEs which had just been introduced. I was the bane of my teachers' lives: "*Has the ability but will not try*" was a frequent comment on my school reports. Then I continued my formal education at Tameside CFE doing a commercial course; shorthand, typing, bookkeeping etc. It was a two-year course but I was not recommended for the second year: – the usual "*Has the ability but will not try*". After I managed to secure a job at the local branch of the Department of Health and Social Security – or the Civil Service as my dad used to tell people. (I was a bit of a disappointment so that helped his social standing).

At 21 I joined the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) and became a Staff Clerk working at the Ministry of Defence, Whitehall. At last, I had found my niche, and absolutely loved army life. However, after only 15 months, I met Brian Compton and fell in love. I knew him for six weeks before we got married. Sadly, for me, he was stationed in Dortmund, West Germany. I had a choice; either stay where I was in London and see him infrequently or resign from the WRAC and join him in Dortmund. I decided on the latter.

We were married for 18 years spending 90% of the time in Germany. I thrived as an army wife and enjoyed my role as Brian steadily rose through the ranks. I looked after the wives when the men went on exercise by organizing events for them, thereby supporting my husband. During this period we had two children who are now grown up. Since my divorce in 1990 I have gained a degree from The University of Life becoming Jill of all Trades and Master of None. It has sometimes been tough but ultimately rewarding. I have done a fair bit of travelling and even relocated to Devon 4 years ago.

Now aged 68 and back in Oldham, I have a great relationship with my son and daughter. I have 3 grandchildren, twin boys born in 2017 and one girl born in 2007. Importantly I have an ever-growing circle of friends and many varied hobbies.

# Exercise Female Frolic

*by Barbara Compton*

At 0930 hrs. 28 May 1983 wives of 19 Bty paraded on the Bty Square for Exercise FEMALE FROLIC. After parade, they split into 3 pre-arranged sections (A, B & C) and left Northumberland Barracks by way of an 8-tonner, 4 tonner and several hangers on.

After some astute map reading by the Platoon Commanders, we arrived at grid 333097 at 1125 hrs., where we all disembarked and got our first taste of mud; it was not to be our last. Here, in a small clearing in a wood we received scant instructions on our various tasks i.e. 24 hr. ration packs, radios, map reading, first aid, patrol base, raft building and NBC (Nuclear, Chemical, Biological) kit. Mrs BENNETT (A Sec) tied pretty bows in the casualty field dressing and then promptly stabbed the casualty with a safety pin. Mrs LONGSTAFF (B Sec) needed first aid treatment herself when the volunteer casualty appeared and Mrs JAMESON looked a delight in NBC kit!

We were fed some sort of lunch which was certainly different but nonetheless welcome. Suffice it to say that while we squatted on the floor, the Battery Commander and Commanding Officer had a table and chairs.

At 0315 hrs. (!) (Mrs LONGSTAFF'S timings) we had a briefing concerning a forced march and RVs. Each section was split into two groups, given 3 grid references, a map, and bidden farewell! Once again Mrs LONGSTAFF scored by getting totally lost! They were last seen going in the direction of Russia. C section gained the first casualty of the exercise when Mrs Mc KEEN suffered badly from blisters.

The whole platoon (with the exception of Mrs LONGSTAFF and co.) met at RV 3 and marched merrily and unsuspectingly along a picturesque track to RV 4. Suddenly, Mrs BENNETT (A Sec) jumped into a ditch and screamed "I saw one!"

Nobody took any notice of her and we carried on regardless. Such folly, because the next we knew we were under heavy attack from the woods on our left. Without further ado, we all jumped into the ditch on our right which happened to be full of stinging nettles! We later discovered that in theory that particular ditch was clay mined. So much for the guidance of the Platoon Commander. The whole platoon (less Mrs LONGSTAFF and co) was then split into two

groups and taken into the woods by Bdrs HILL and Andrews and the mysteries of the SDG (Special Defence Group) unfolded. Each group had a casualty to deal with who, after our noble attempts at first aid, rather wished they'd been killed outright! C Sec casualty had half a leg missing and Mrs COMPTON had the bright idea of sending someone to look for it, simply so we could use the putty as a bandage (a putty is a length of khaki coloured felt used by soldiers to cover the space between the top of boots and the trousers). A Sec casualty, who had many yards of intestines there for all to see, was soon in stitches at Mrs GETTY's attempt to put them back in place! In both cases the stretchers we made were of little use as both casualties fell off.

Approximately 1730 hrs. vehicle orienteering got under way and Mrs LONGSTAFF deigned to join us. Many incidents occurred as the sections were split into 3 groups, so there were 9 Land Rovers in all careering around the countryside. Some of the more eventful incidents obviously involved Mrs LONGSTAFF (B Sec) who managed to get her Land Rover bogged down and had to be rescued by the Battery Commander. Mrs SCORER (B Sec again!) had a heavier hand than she ever suspected for such a dainty girl because, as she was about to shut the Land Rover door it fell off!

Mrs COMPTON (C Sec) managed to lose a contact lens which sped with the speed of light at the end of a twig into the middle of the wood. L/Bdr WILSON actually went to look for it! Talk about the proverbial needle in a haystack! Not disheartened they carried on and under cover of darkness happened to stumble across a pub where the gallant L/Bdr WILSON bought us a beer. Mrs CASEY (A Sec) and co found their Land Rover rapidly running out of fuel which did not help matters.

The last Land Rover arrived at the final RV at approx. 2230 hrs. and all ladies were very tired and very hungry.

We were then taken and deposited at the patrol base. The first priority was to find Mrs COMPTON's glasses as she was totally blind. In the dark and whilst we were totally confused Second Lt. DUHIG calmly bade us form a secure patrol base, not an easy task. The least said about this the better but it must be mentioned that after distribution of rations all sections forgot instructions about no lights and keeping quiet and commenced cooking. In the midst of our midnight feast we came under attack which provided welcome light by which to eat. We did find however that the food tasted better when we couldn't actually see!

Despite the primitive surroundings, we still had a toilet, complete with seat, paper and a red light, thanks to the BQMS! After much giggling and confusion, lights out was approximately 0130 hrs. During the night rain fell and Mrs BOARDMAN (A Sec) managed to roll out of her bivouac (a temporary cover made out of a piece of waterproof tarpaulin and held down with 4 tent pegs) and woke totally refreshed ... and extremely wet!

Reveille was at 0500 hrs. along with an urn of tea which some ladies (A Sec) cunningly laced with brandy, purely for extra warmth of course. Breakfast followed at 0610 hrs. which was more than gratefully received, thanks again to the BQMS and staff.

At 0645 hrs. the BC informed section leaders that a drill competition would follow. No panic, until he mentioned that the section leaders would take the drill after the BSM (Battery Sergeant Major) had finished. This led to amazing results. Not many ladies knew their left from their right, especially C Sec who at one stage had each lady facing in different directions.

At 0900 hrs. the assault course beckoned menacingly at 4 ladies from each section. Each lady who took part deserves a separate mention for the determination and endurance they displayed.

A Sec: Mrs BOARDMAN, BROSTER, BENNETT, CASEY

B Sec: Mrs DARLOW, LONGSTAFF, SCORER, EVANS

C Sec: Mrs HUGILL, JAMESON, ANDREWS, BARTRUM

They won the admiration of all the men and the other ladies. It was still not without its moments: one such being Mrs LONGSTAFF (again) rolling down the hill in NBC kit. Sgt. CALVERSBERT proved he was a tower of strength by tossing several ladies in the river. At this stage of the horseplay there suddenly appeared a very large party of bemused German ramblers out for a Sunday stroll! Such a spectacle they had never seen before!

At last, the results of the competition. Amazingly B Sec somehow came out on top – has the BC got a warped sense of humour? Anyway all the ladies of that section received 3 bars of soap each from the BC (subtle!). There followed an SDG and Launcher demo during which the wet ladies took the opportunity to change into dry clothes.

Finally, we enjoyed a barbeque which our husbands and children attended, making a good finish to a terrific weekend. All husbands are now guaranteed (well nearly all) a hot bath, cup of tea and plenty of sympathy when returning from exercise.

## Corridor Capers – Summer 1988



*Barbara and Cindy*

I was married to a senior rank, Warrant Officer 2, who served in 50 Missile Regiment in the British Army based in Menden, West Germany. I worked and played with Cindy, a leading light in the entertainment business, both as a singer and as an entrepreneur organising functions for the troops at many of the Army camps. I became involved with Cindy initially when I worked for a German Reisebureau based in the camp. She came into the office one day enquiring about travel tickets to and from the UK. We became firm friends immediately and, ultimately, I quit my job at the Reisebureau and began working for her. During the day, I worked as her secretary and in the evenings, I became her roadie if she was singing at one of many camps based in BAOR at that time.

In the Summer of 1988, Cindy had a gig in West Berlin singing at a Sergeants Mess Summer Ball. I recall that it was a Scottish Regiment but cannot remember which one. I was to accompany her as her roadie, helping to set up the stage, sound system and lighting ready for her performance. Preparation for the journey took several weeks as I was going to drive to Berlin in my car which was registered as belonging to Forces personnel and, as such, had easily identifiable number plates; all the number plates began with the letter B denoting British Forces.

In the Cold War<sup>1</sup>, it was necessary to receive special permission to drive through East Germany into West Berlin. The rules and regulations were endless. Having signed and collected all the necessary documentation, we set off, on a bright sunny day full of high spirits, for Helmstedt. West Berlin, 104 miles away, was an island of freedom attached to free West Germany by an umbilical cord called the Berlin Corridor. We arrived at the East German border eventually, after seeing the flags of the UK, France and the USA flapping in the breeze. Then there was a red flag ahead with the hammer and sickle emblem in the corner.



Initially we had to sit through a video of the passage through the corridor indicating the dos and don'ts. The pertinent rules I recall were:

*Do not stop anywhere on the corridor.*

*Do not go down any of the exit routes off the corridor into East Germany.*

*Do not make eye contact with any other car drivers or passengers.*

*Do not make eye contact particularly with any Russian military vehicles.*

*Should you break down you will be rescued by British Military Police who will be driving up and down the corridor all day.*

We were also given a fairly large notice to stick in our passenger window in case of break down which announced that we were British Military personnel.

Suddenly, the seriousness of this journey weighed heavily on me although Cindy thought the whole thing was a blast!

After ensuring that we had a full tank of petrol our start time was logged and phoned through to the other end. We were advised of our ETA. If we arrived any earlier we would have been speeding and would be fined, and if any later the Military Police would be out looking for us!

So... off we set on the 104 mile journey, me with rapidly beating heart, Cindy full of giggles!

STOP! Huge billboard photograph of Gorbachev staring at us.



The first realisation of the seriousness of this journey was when I was halted by a young, unsmiling, armed, Russian soldier on a quiet side road before we actually got onto the corridor: there were no other cars, no bird song, no sounds at all. It was very eerie and very scary.

I alighted from the car as instructed, saluted the soldier as instructed, and proceeded to follow him to a wooden hut whilst aware that Cindy was in the car grinning broadly and finding it all terribly amusing. The wooden hut was completely empty: however, one wall had a slit rather like the slit in a post box and the Russian soldier signalled that I should place my papers and passports into this slit. This I did without hesitation needless to say. I could see nobody at all but I could hear the guttural, gruff Russian voices from the other side of the slit. I felt very alone!

After about 5 minutes (which felt like 5 hours), my papers and passports appeared through the slit duly signed and rubber stamped. Phew! Leaving the hut, I again saluted the Russian soldier and got in the car. Phase 1 completed, or so I thought.

STOP! There was a huge wooden pole across the road with a concrete counter balance. We were checked again by another soldier who just peered into the car then nodded us on. 200 yards further on we were met by a metal barrier with sharp spikes. Later, yet another huge wooden pole with a concrete counter balance so it could stop a car instantly. The road was lined with double row of concrete fence posts with twisted barbed wire between.

Finally, there was no barbed wire so it looked like a normal autobahn. The journey along the corridor was uneventful apart from keeping a sharp eye on my speedo as I did not want a fine. It was noticeable that most of the cars travelling on the autobahn were much older than the vehicles in West Germany and carrying many passengers; I understand that fuel was expensive in the East therefore not many cars were seen with only a driver and



no passengers. From the car, we could look at the fields to the side; people were working in them with not much in the way of machinery. The whole picture was 'dowdy' and colourless. Possibly we had a preconceived mind-set of hardship in the East and were transposing the scene to our brain accordingly. It certainly didn't provide me with a burning desire to visit East Germany.

At one stage a Russian military vehicle carrying several high-ranking officials, judging by the stars on the epaulettes on their jackets, appeared on Cindy's side. Having scant regard for our safety, she grinned and waved at them. There was no response from them: it was like red rag to a bull! She carried on like that for several miles despite my admonishments of "Please don't do that, we may get arrested or even kidnapped".

As we neared Berlin there were double concrete posts and barbed wire again on both sides.



CHECKPOINT! All cars were stopped and we had to show our papers, passports, and car documents again briefly. Then another 100 yards ahead, there was more careful searching of our car and documents had to be produced. Eventually we were waved on and what a beautiful sight greeted us: amongst other flags was the good old Union Jack! Were we glad to see that!

I am happy to report that the gig was a roaring success. The hosts were delightful. The trip was a worthwhile venture. We did manage, after only a few hours sleep, a whistle-stop tour of West Berlin and took some photos of our time there (author in the blue dress, artiste in the orange/white).



*Potsdamer Platz*



*Spandau Prison*

The return trip was relatively uneventful as we were now veterans of the Berlin Corridor Experience! Cindy opted to drive which I thought would keep her out of mischief although she did find the whole business of saluting the young soldier an opportunity to show off her skills at 'sashaying' from the car to salute him – or throw her hand to her forehead in a GI kind of move! Most disrespectful but I managed to smother my laughter at the expression on his face!

She also managed to blag us a room for the night in Checkpoint Alpha when we arrived back into West Germany. After a few drinks in the bar it was good to grab a few hours sleep after the previous eventful 24 hours!

1. See note 2 The Post-war Recovery by RGC



*RGC and Jiří Köhler in Prostějov*

‘Jak jsem se stal profesionálním vojákem a prožil produktivní věk v československé lidové armádě. Ze střední školy jsem odcházel na vysokou školu technického zaměření s představou, že se budu v životě zabývat a živit přesnou a jemnou mechanikou a optikou. Jako koníček budu mít hru na varhany se zájmem o stavbu varhan s cílem si postavit malé varhany zvané positiv....’

\* \* \*

## The Other Side of the Iron Curtain – A Czech’s Account of Life in the Army

HOW I BECAME A PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER –  
LIFE IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE’S ARMY

*by Ing. Jiří Köhler*

*Translated by his daughter Kateřina Köhlerová*

From high school, I went to a technical college with the idea of dealing with precise and subtle mechanics and optics. However, I played the organ and was interested in building an organ called Positiv. In 1968, I started studying at the Czech Technical University in Prague, with average results, and played the organ usually at Vyšehrad in the Church of Saints Peter and Paul. Political intrigues in the Czechoslovak youth union did not interest me until a student denounced me. In the department I was shown my photograph, along with other colleagues, singing the Gregorian chant in the ministry sutanas (ceremonial clothes).

Another surprise was the mathematics examination, when the examiner said: ‘so, *monk*, what do you know right now, you have failed twice.’ I failed many exams, and the third surprise came in the third year at Christmas, when I received a letter of exclusion from study and a ban from all other colleges. It was a shock for me, and suddenly I did not know what I could do. Fortunately, the director at Vyšehrad was a singer and also a good organist who helped me a lot with the then director of the Research and Development Institute of Woodworking in Prague. They immediately accepted me in employment and after paying six contributions to the ROH (Revolutionary Trade Movement), I was confirmed as an assistant labourer half a year before I left school. This was important because I escaped the charge of living off my parents, which carried a criminal sentence of up to two years in prison. I worked on different tasks, according to what was needed. One task was to solve the problem of plasticising softwood to make it chemically, then subsequently pressed to produce a very strong abrasion-resistant material intended for packaging tea for the Soviet Union. During the dynamic tests of the samples made at the Military Research Institute in Prague, I met a man wearing working protective clothing who carried out stress testing

of the TATRA truck chassis. During the night, when we were both testing and processing data, there was time for an interview. After about a month, I met this master in a general's uniform – he was the commander of a dynamic testing laboratory of materials and construction groups.

In my mind, I was afraid, because we were having fun at night all the time. But I was kindly welcomed, and he offered me the opportunity to apply to study at the Antonín Zápotocký Military Academy in Brno. Regarding my note about cadre materials from CTU Prague and the prohibition of studying at all universities, he smiled: 'Tomorrow you will come to the Prague 2 Military Administration, I will call and destroy the compromising materials from the CTU.'

I did as he told me and at the end of the holidays, I went to study at the Antonín Zápotocký Military Academy in Brno. I began to familiarise myself with the concept of state defence: the protection of citizens and state property (factories, apartment buildings, transport infrastructure and all engineering networks). Everything was designed with the utmost regard for high economy and universality. For every citizen, starting with newborns and hospitalised patients, a set of clothing and equipment for survival was in store. Interestingly for newborns, there was breathing ventilation apparatus and there were partially heatable bags with a kit for babies, infants or young children. This concept builds on that launched and developed under the First Republic of the 1930s, then using the experience of World War II and natural disasters around the world. For all health establishments and schools and housing estates, mobile drinking water tanks, along with mobile water treatment facilities (rivers, streams and ponds), were prepared for drinking water for health care professionals. In the warehouses, electric aggregates were used as spare power sources in the event of a large black-out from power failure. The construction of the buses was designed so that the seats could be easily removed and replaced by a system with detachable carrier rails to transport the wounded. Basically, the national economy at that time was conceived so that in the event of an attack on the state, all production would become a war regime in order to ensure the supply of an army for the defence of the territory and the population that would work in the war industry and protect children and the sick.

I understood that all that was learned and done in the army

had logical connections and great significance for the state. Military technology has been designed to provide maximum crew protection, economy and repairability both in training and in the event of war. A number of military installations had to be dealt with in such a way as to make the most possible use of them during the peace period and, in the event of an attack on the state, a virtually immediate transition to the war regime. It had the advantage that people were accustomed to the equipment and the environment. This system was used immediately in natural disasters, as demonstrated by the great floods in Moravia. Several bridges were pulled down along the main railway line and replaced by a new bridge construction in a few days, since each steel bridge was made in two sections and the reserve structures were stored at the local rail stations. The floods were in November 1989, and stockpiles from the warehouses had not yet been stolen, and most of the military services assigned to disaster relief tasks still existed.

It is very sad that with the gradual liquidation of the Czechoslovak People's Army and the replacement of the professional corps under Western and American control, everything was destroyed. We have an army that is more like an armed agency that operates on foreign missions, but which cannot defend our own territory. Unfortunately, we can see how various natural disasters around the world point to the pitiful lack of technical and reconstruction materials, including materials and aids for the health and fire services, and an inadequate warning system.

None of the politicians in the Brussels EU government has any knowledge about this context and there is a resulting lack of interest in resolving the protection of the population, entire territories and states. They are drowning in open discussions and making comical and stupid decisions from the point of view of the Member States. So the current so-called sparse number of US troops across our territory to the Russian borders under various pretexts is only a demonstration of power, but it is not a defensive force. It is just expensive theatre for some naive citizens. In the event of an armed conflict with Russia, there will be a massive humanitarian disaster, followed by a natural disaster caused by the Russian troops.

Finally, I would like to say that I do not regret the time spent in the army and I am proud of my involvement in the Czechoslovak People's Army working team, which at that time really served the people and citizens of the Republic. The military participated in the upbringing and discipline of the young men that led to patriotism,

responsibility, self-sufficiency and increased physical fitness, physical and psychological resilience. Working in a team and participating in joint work, cleaning and training, taught mutual tolerance and respect among people of different mentalities and abilities.

The absence of military service is manifested today by an increase in recklessness, blunt egoism, aggressiveness in society, and youth turning to drugs to escape life's problems. Although I was working in the purely technical field of the technical repair of optical instruments and related opto-electronics, I collaborated with the aforementioned sections. My retraining in ophthalmic optics was not difficult because I had experience from the design project of an ophthalmologist's mobile clinic making eyeglasses under war conditions. I worked in the field of ophthalmology until retirement and I am still working.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Richard and Matthew at Denise's Riverside Home in Guildford, c.2010*

## Matthew Snowden interviews some of the crew of HMS Glasgow in Southsea

### HMS GLASGOW

In response to the invasion of the Falkland Islands by Argentina in 1982, Britain sent a naval Task Force charged with retaking the islands. *Glasgow*, one of five type 42 destroyers, armed with sea Dart anti-aircraft missiles and a 4.5inch Mark 8 gun, took up its position, along with her sister ships, *Coventry* and *Sheffield*, in the 200-nautical-mile Exclusion Zone around the islands created by British.

*Glasgow* was damaged by a bomb released by a Skyhawk C-248 piloted by Lt Gavazzi, which did not explode but did considerable damage to the engine room disabling the engines. On his return flight, Lt Gavazzi, just before he was shot down and killed, dropped a bomb which hit the ship slightly above the waterline. The hole was filled while the ship was kept above the waterline in a circular manoeuvre. The ship was forced to return to Portsmouth dockyard for repairs and returned in August 1982 when the war was over.



*HMS GLASGOW*



## THE FALKLANDS WAR

The early 1980s saw a period of deep economic stress in Britain. The newly elected Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher was savagely cutting back spending across the board in Britain. Some of these cuts would send very mixed messages to the Argentinians who sensed that perhaps British opinion was moving away from supporting the Falkland Islanders. The British government announced that it was closing down the Antarctic Research station on the nearby island of South Georgia. John Nott, the Minister for Defence, announced sweeping cuts in the Royal Navy including the withdrawal of the Antarctic Research vessel HMS *Endurance* from service and making it clear that it would not be replaced. Perhaps the most baffling decision was the withdrawal of Full British Citizenship for the islanders. This had actually been introduced to prevent a massive influx from Hong Kong before its return to China, but the rules were applied to all the British dependencies and possibly helped convince the Argentinians that British commitment to the islands was beginning to wear thin. These signals helped the Argentine generals convince themselves that the British might not have the resolve to recover the islands by force should the Argentines be able to seize them.

The British government was not the only government to see economic difficulties in the early 1980s. The Argentinian military government (the Junta) had presided over a collapsing currency, runaway inflation at over 100% and had been forced to introduce savage cuts of their own in Argentina. It was these cuts to services and benefits that saw Argentines take to the streets early in 1982. These demonstrations began to get out of hand, and the Junta sensed that it was losing popularity and even the ability to impose law and order. It was thought that they might be able to restore some of their credibility by playing to their institutional strength and launching an invasion of what they referred to as the 'Malvinas'.

(Source: britishempire.co.uk)

The Task Force that set sail for the Falkland Islands to retake them from the Argentinians who had invaded the islands on 2 April 1982, was 'the last example of old-style gunboat diplomacy and certainly the last imperial war'. It also exposed how much Britain had reduced its military capability, especially naval assets. It is argued that today a similar operation would not be possible.

In the event, the Argentine forces, after a three-hour fight with the Royal Marine garrison which was ordered to surrender, captured the islands. After the Argentinian's largest Battleship, the *General Belgrano*, was sunk outside the 200-mile exclusion zone and four Argentinian warplanes were downed, the Royal Navy came under intensive air attack. HMS *Sheffield* was hit and sunk by an exocet missile; HMS *Glasgow* was hit, as described. After the British land invasion on 21 May, HMS *Argonaut* was crippled,

HMS *Ardent* and HMS *Antelope* were sunk. On 25 May an exocet missile hit the huge merchant cargo ship, *Atlantic Conveyor* which sank. HMS *Coventry* was also sunk. On June 12th, an exocet missile struck HMS *Glamorgan*.

The unconditional surrender of Argentine troops took place on the Falklands on 14 June. Our losses overall totalled: 255 killed; 775 wounded; 115 POWs; 2 destroyers; 2 frigates; 1 LSL ship; 1 LCU craft; 1 container ship; 24 helicopters; 10 fighters and 1 bomber interned in Brazil.

The result of the British victory led to Margaret Thatcher's fortunes being reversed. She was transformed from being a highly unpopular Prime Minister to a highly celebrated and popular one. Instead of losing the next general election, as seemed likely before the conflict, she won it. The opposite effect was to be seen in Argentina as General Galtieri was toppled from power and the country started the process of returning to democracy after brutal and disastrous military rule by the Junta.

### HMS GLASGOW REUNION, 5 MAY 2012

The following interviews were broadcast on Angel Radio which covers the Portsmouth, Gosport and Havant areas of Hampshire. The interviewees were Chief Petty Officer Geoff Waddington, Leading Stoker Craig Boswell, and Lauren who were all former crew members of HMS *Glasgow*. The event was recorded by Tony Devine at the Ship Anson pub at The Hard, Portsmouth Dockyard on May 5th, 2012. The Angel Radio Station Manager, Tony Smith, has been exceptionally helpful in providing a CD of the original 28-minute broadcast.



The Anson Pub, Portsmouth Dockyard



Matthew Snowdon

*Geoff Waddington and Craig Boswell were interviewed first. There then follows a transcript of Matthew Snowden, the 11 year-old cub reporter, interviewing Lauren. By complete chance Denise, Matthew and I were in the Ship Anson leading to Matthew being enrolled as a cub reporter by Tony Levine of Angel Radio.*

#### **GEOFF WADDINGTON'S ACCOUNT**

"I'm Geoff Waddington. I was Chief Petty Officer Waddington and I was in the engine room at the time. They call me head for bombs because the bomb passed within three feet above my head. When we were in Gibraltar with the largest gathering of ships since the second world war we went out on exercise and then we were told we were going to the Falklands. We had to try to get the ships that were going south as well equipped as possible: we started moving stores between ships and also moving people between ships as we did not have enough people to man the ship so my captain requisitioned some people from HMS *Dido* and we also had a class of trainee stokers on board-some of whom are here today. They'd just been six weeks in the navy so we decided to keep them as well. We set off south and arrived in the Falklands on 1st May and we were the first ship to enter the Exclusion Zone.

Obviously, people know what happened from then on when the Sheffield got hit which was a very bad day for us. It was the first of the air pickets to be hit especially as we were aware of the air attack and had warned everybody of the air attack. It was quite shameful that *Sheffield* was not aware of what was going on. That all hit us quite badly. We were going in at night and shelling the shore; we were doing night-time shore bombardment then the navy decided we would do daytime shore bombardment which obviously was not a very good idea. This put a lot of ships into a dangerous situation because close inshore you cannot see with your radar what is coming. We were given a goalkeeper to go with us called HMS *Brilliant* because she had a Swiss missile system called Sea Wolf which is a short-range system that can operate close to land. *Brilliant* was absolutely brilliant and without her we would not be here today. We were attacked during our bombardment by three waves of aircraft. *Brilliant* shot down quite a few of them; unfortunately, our guns had to stop firing because the missiles were taking out the shells; our missile system failed to operate so we lost our missile system and our 4.5 inch Mark 8 gun jammed and when we were hit by the bomb our total armament was a browning pistol and a machine gun for the seaman on the bridge

wing. Anyway, one of the aircraft coming in was blown up. In the third wave one of the aircraft managed to launch his bomb and at the last minute it skipped across the surface of the water and went straight through the ship. He passed between the mast and the funnel. The bomb came in on the starboard side of the ship and I was in the engine room at the time. When it hit the side of the ship I'd been relaying to the guys in front of me what was going on so we were aware when we heard 'standby' that something was about to happen. I had nowhere to go because I was stood between two gas turbine engines so when I heard the bang to my right I could only go that way. There was a young man in front of me called Colin Eastwood. His job was to start the port time; my job was to put chaff into the exhaust at the time to distract missiles. I took him with me and we ended up in a big heap on the top steps of the gear boxes and behind us was just a mess. The bomb had gone through all the important systems of the ship; it had gone through the starboard stabilizer system; starboard fire main system; it had gone through the air compressor; it had gone through the lube oil tank; it went through the starboard time intake; it went through the magloop; it went through the fuel sump behind me which is why I got drenched in diesel fuel; it went through the port time intake, it ruptured the airflow in our bulkhead, split the fuel tank on the bulkhead there, took all the electrical boxes out, took out the port filing system, took out the port stabilizer, took out the port air system and then out through the port side. That was it really.

We were in a bit of a state: we had water pouring in from both sides; there was fire main pouring in from both sides 120 psi, fuel, air, sparks, you name it. We took a second to think about it. We were all waiting for the bang. But there was no bang. There was no fire. Young Colin said to me 'shall I lay a foam blanket, chief?' and I said 'go ahead, son' – gives him something to do. I ran around isolating all the fuel and the air trying to stop as much stuff as I could from coming in but I could not stop the firemen from coming in and I could not tell anyone what was going on because I had lost all my communications. I managed to beat the clips off the hatch and get out of the hatch into the passageway and slithered down the hatch on a film of diesel to the MCR which was in complete chaos. The senior control room and everything was going off: nobody knew what was going on, went to HQ1. Everything was the same: I told them I had to isolate the fire main, ran down the port passageway isolated the port fire main, went back to HQ1/

MCR, isolated the starboard fire main. Then I went back down the engine room and we started putting bedding in the hole to stop the water from coming in as teams of guys started to turn up. Then we had another air attack so everyone had to go away and shut the hatches. We had to sit it out for another air attack which we survived then the hatches were back open again, guys were back down there and we started the process of trying to make things better.

I got a big portable pump brought down and I took that down between the tines and I lifted up the plates which were now below water. I took the portable pump down below the bilge. The water was fizzing because it was full of electricity and you were getting electric shocks and Christ knows what else. We got the pump running, started to get the bilge level down and then I was evacuated out to my next station. I was taken to the sick bay and given a wash in Savlon because we had no hot water and only half power. I was given a clean pair of overalls and charged for the overalls I'd lost! As soon as I could, I got back down to help with the effort of shoring up and we got some timber in there and we kept the water at bay and that was all good. We were coping quite well and during the time I was out the other guys had done a grand job and the time had come when we were going to have to put some steel plates in and make a proper repair of this. So they sent some people over from *Hermes* to help us with welding equipment and steel plate with them and a shipwright officer who was a bit concerned about taking the wooden shoring away and the water came pouring in. There was no way out of this as they had to go. I took a sledge hammer and knocked the shoring away and sure enough the water came pouring in and now I said we are going to have to do something about it. So, they got the plate in there, got the guys in there and now it was my turn to go to the machinery control room and be the Chief of the Watch. My mate Kevin Lake was down there, the shipwright, to help get things sorted out. There was water coming in and he said 'I can weld underwater or in the air but I can't weld in both.'

We can't transfer fuel and there is not a lot we can do but we can make the ship turn in circles to make it keel over. So, I called up Lieutenant Commander Greytrix, the Officer of the Watch, and said can you do some doughnuts.

'Excuse me?' I said, Can you go round in circles?'

So, we sailed around in circles and we welded one side and then we sailed round in circles the other way and that's how we got the steel in."

#### CRAIG BOSWELL'S ACCOUNT

"I was a leading stoker on HMS *Glasgow*, 1982, during the Falkland's conflict. I suppose it started at the beginning when we travelled down to Gibraltar for an exercise in January/February 1982 when we heard that the Argentinians had invaded the Falklands and, like everyone else, nobody knew where the Falklands were. We got some schoolboy atlases out from the library and discovered where the Falklands were. There was no navigation system as such to get us down there. The Navigation Officer went down to the Ascension Islands on a schoolboy atlas and heading down south we knew that by the time we got to Ascension everything would be finished: there would be no need for us to go any further south.

We got to Ascension and discovered that it hadn't finished, we'd have to carry on further south and we offloaded a load of kit at Ascension Island and met up with the rest of the guys, the rest of the fleet and we carried on south. Everybody expected that by the time we got further south it would all be over and there would be nothing for us to do. I think we were the first ship to arrive at the Exclusion Zone, the 200 mile perimeter set by the government saying that anything that comes in there could be deemed as an aggressor. There were three of us, HMS *Glasgow*, HMS *Sheffield* and HMS *Coventry* – we were goalkeeping. We were ahead of the fleet so if any attacks came in we would take them out before they got to the aircraft carrier *Hermes* and life just went into a routine and we took South Georgia. That took us through to May.

We knew things were getting serious when the *General Belgrano* was sunk. It came up that the *General Belgrano* had been sunk by HMS *Conqueror*. I remember the day that HMS *Sheffield* was sunk when we were on the upper deck together. The *Sheffield*, *Coventry* and *Glasgow* were together and I was looking across at the *Sheffield* on fire. It was surreal, like a movie, like something you watch on TV. That affected us quite badly as we were susceptible to it. I was 21 and I felt that I was young but I was never scared. It was always it was not going to happen to me type of thing. We had the Admiral of the Fleet come on board, Andy Woodward, who said some of you won't come back but most of you will. It will be a naval battle rather than air fought and have you all written your wills. Everyone had to write a will and it was those little things when you are only 21. We had gone in to do NGS (Naval Gunfire Support) just off Port Stanley and we had gone along with the type 22 HMS *Brilliant*, and

then we started firing into the land taking out targets and as we were leaving one of the guys on the bridge wing said he had seen a tank on the beach and we turned around to engage the tank and that is when we came under attack from the aircraft. There were three waves of four, and I am trying to remember – this was 33 years ago and I am trying to remember as best I can, but the first wave that came in nothing hit us; the second wave that came in – the first bomb missed us, went over the side and exploded. One of the aircraft came in, dropped the bomb which hit us midships in one side and out the other.

Part of my job as a damage control officer was to go to the scene of the hit so I went down: there was myself, Geoff Waddington, Lee Cartwright and Michael 'Fingers' Fisher; the engine room was flooding quite badly. I went in and the water was getting higher and higher and the pump sump was trying to keep a level that we could work in. When you are taught in training school about damage control, they give you a flat surface to work on but there were no flat surfaces on the ship. It was diesel tanks leaking; you were getting 440 volts electric shocks, cables hanging; the water was freezing cold and it was just an experience not to be re-lived. It was different. We carried on, went down into the engine room and had to do damage control. We had to use mattresses, anything, sheets and the stuff came down from the stokers' mess, the mess I was in, and they were bringing in our mattresses, our sleeping bags and I recognised my sleeping bag as it passed me going to pack up the hole.

However, the waves were quite large and every time we packed up the wave would hit the side of the ship and push in everything we packed up so the hole would keep reappearing. There were two holes – one on the port side and one on the starboard side. I should imagine that the bomb had created petals of a rose so that it was impossible to pack up but I imagine the other side was a bit flatter. The waves would come in and the pumps couldn't keep up because all the mattresses, sheets and bits and pieces were getting taken down into the bilge and were blocking up the pumps. We had to go under the water to try and clear the pumps and carry on.

One of the funniest things that I remember [well, you might say funny in the circumstances] was that part of my job was to maintain each ship with a laundry on board and the laundry was run by two Chinese. We had number 1 and number 2 – that was all they were called. Because I maintained the laundry number 2's

name was Charlie. When I heard 'Jock, Jock!', I looked up the top of the hatch and Charlie was standing there.

'Jock, Jock! No steam, no steam, no laundry!'

I says, 'Charlie we have been hit by a bomb, there is no steam because we are sinking.'

He says, 'No steam, no laundry!'

I says, 'Charlie, away you go!' So, he disappeared.

Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes later Charlie appeared at the top of the hatch 'Jock, Jock!'

I says, 'Charlie, I told you we are sinking.'

He had a black bucket with him. He says, 'Fish? Any fish?'

I says, 'Charlie, there are no fish, would you please go and we'll come and tell you when we are better.'

That was one of the best moments of the whole...It brought me back to reality. Here there were these two guys thousands of miles from home-as we were-no family, no contact and all he was worried about was getting the laundry done for the guys on board and making sure we had food. That was one of the funniest moments."

This is Matthew Snowdon talking to Lauren about HMS *Glasgow*:  
MS: So, please tell us what happened?

L: We were on patrol. It was about the 12th May and we were carrying out what is called a NGE – Naval Gun Exercise against an Argentine position with a ship called HMS *Brilliant* when we were attacked by several flights of Argentine aircraft. The first wave was shot down and splashed and their bombs missed; the second one ... what basically happened was the Douglas A-4B Skyhawk plane released its bomb and it flew over the ship and it splashed in the sea behind us and the other bomb hit us right in the middle of the ship and it went straight through the ship. It went in one side and out the other taking all the machinery and equipment, the engines out of action. Instantly the ship started to flood very quickly. So, the young guys-I was just over 16 years old back then-sprang into action trying to stop the water getting in. We later heard the poor gentleman from the Argentine Air Force was shot down by his own side whilst he was flying back to the Argentine coast over the Falkland Islands. We were unable to do very much for several hours and we ended up several days under repairs and then approximately two and a half days later we were back frontline defending the aircraft carrier again which was our

prime function during the Falklands.

MS: Whereabouts were you in the Falklands War?

L: We were all around various locations around the Falklands at the time. We were carrying out NGS (Naval Gunfire Support) if I remember at the time not very far away from Port San Carlos where they did the big landings softening everything up for the Royal Marines and the other troops to go ashore.

MS: What was your captain like?

L: Our captain was a gentleman by the name of Captain Paul Hoddinott and he was brilliant, a really, really nice man, always thought of his crew, very much a case of what we were doing, making sure we were prepared. I think if you could compare him to anyone it would be Nelson. He drilled us and drilled us just like Nelson used to drill his ship's company until such time as we were literally pitch perfect at everything we did and if it wasn't for him and the way that he worked back then most of us would not be here today. We almost got hit by an exocet but with his pre-thought and the fact that he knew something was coming he shut us down into action stations a long time before any other ship in the fleet did.

MS: Whereabouts were you working on the ship?

L: At the time, I was in the after electrical distribution room not very far away from where the bomb actually went through us. We heard the impact of the bomb and I instantly went down the port side, inside the hatch into the engine room. Looking down all I could see was water pouring in and it was already half-way up the engine room. You have to bear in mind the engine is something like 22 feet tall and it was already about 11 feet deep in literally seconds. I went down the ladder and my feet were already getting wet. My job was to try to get one of the main motors running that drove the gearbox. I was an electrician and had to get that piece of equipment going asap while other people behind me tried to stop the leaks. We were very lucky and managed to do our job. One of my bosses by the name of Craig Boswell wedged himself in the hole to stop the water coming through and every time the ship went to one side he rolled underwater and then he rolled back up and he waved at the ship behind us so everyone knew he was still alive. We all laughed as the captain said 'Would the person waving to HMS *Brilliant* please stop waving at them because they are getting stressed out but what they didn't realise was that he

was waving to let everyone know he was still alive although he had been underwater for a long time.

MS: How did you feel when you got hit by the bomb?

L: To be honest there was not a lot of emotion because we were all honed to do a job and we just did our job and we went into auto-mode because everybody knew that if we didn't do what we had to do then somebody else would probably have their life on the line because we hadn't done what was expected of us. It's all about team work. Everybody relies on everybody else to do their job.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Post-War Recovery – Through the eyes of a child.



My Mother asked me to place my father's several rows of medals on him in his coffin, a difficult task in which I was aided by my brother-in-law, George MacCormack. Sam's funeral was at St. Peter's Church which was overflowing with friends, fellow masons, family and acquaintances. The coffin was draped with the RAF flag over which my great friend Judith Finnemore leaned over towards me weeping. After the service, all along the two-mile route to the cemetery men and an occasional woman – saluted and bowed in respect to the flag and, in many cases, no doubt thought of lost comrades. SJC left the RAF after the war saying grimly that most of his close friends had died in the war. In Egypt, he had put to good use the three Egyptian dialects he had learned. He, like so many others, clung to memories of their comradely life in re-convening at the RAF Club in Sea Road, Boscombe, where they celebrated a meaningful past and paid respect to the shades of their fallen comrades with regular toasts.

On leaving the RAF, Sam organized exhibitions at Earls Court and other venues, apart from promoting boxing matches to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund. He was also the Secretary of the Boscombe Hospital League of Friends. His main interest was the music of Richard Wagner (1813–1883) whose week-long concerts in London he attended whenever he could. It was no doubt also a welcome relief from *Menagerie Manor* in which, as described in my blog – [countclarkula.wordpress.com](http://countclarkula.wordpress.com) [Count Clarkula. The Clarkives] – 'My Mother-known as the Angel of and Queen of the drop-outs-reigned and performed her work with the homeless and mentally ill, and was nominated for an OBE. It was an eclectic household which embraced transvestites, earls, millionaires and others in transit'.

Children often learn seminal things about their parents after they have died. RGC did when he was regaled at the lodge with anecdotes about Sam's generosity as so many people came forward to commiserate with tales of how he had given money to them. Leslie Haskell, the once brilliant concert pianist before 'jungle juice'

took its grip on him, was a key beneficiary as Sam paid for Leslie and Trudi, his Jewish wife, to stay at The Chine Hotel in Boscombe because Trudi insisted on maintaining standards as Leslie's career crumbled. Sam to the rescue.

In this autobiographical aside it seems essential to mention important historic realities. These limiting and enabling forces provided the context for our emerging lives. War shaped the destiny of my parents and their contemporaries. Its psychological legacy dominated my childhood and that of my sister who was born on 6 July, a few weeks before the start of the second world war on 3 September 1939.

When I was born on 29 March 1945, the UK was six weeks away from the end of the second world war in Europe on 8 May. The war in the Pacific with Japan continued. The Americans dropped two atomic bombs on Japan, which then announced its surrender to the Allies six days after the bomb on Nagasaki, signing the Instrument of Surrender on 2 September and officially ending World War II. Churchill personified the division of post-war Europe into East and West as being divided by an Iron Curtain in his speech on 5 March 1946 at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."<sup>1</sup>

Before this speech, the U.S. and Britain had been concerned with their own post-war economies and had remained extremely grateful for the Soviet Union's proactive role in ending World War II. It was Churchill's speech, which he titled "The Sinews of Peace," that changed the way the democratic West viewed the Communist East. This Cold War lasted from c.1947–1991.<sup>2</sup> Its impact on the daily lives of Europeans was to create an uneasy tension, permanent concern and doubt about the future.

The fear of annihilation first by atomic then nuclear war overshadowed us *every* day. It was a waking nightmare topped up regularly by double page or longer articles in newspapers which showed A or V bombers, on both sides, carrying these doomsday weapons, how they were on patrol 24 hours, refuelled in mid-air and how they would find their targets.

My childhood friend Gillian Harrington's brother Michael used to tell us that he would fly his V bomber for free. He could not understand why he was paid to fly this aircraft as he got 'such a buzz from firing up the engines and taking off with all that power surging forward'. My childhood was dotted with war reports from

the radio – later television – and my father's selection of articles from the newspapers read out to my mother. We were not allowed to read the newspapers. I never learned why. You simply did not question such decisions. It was obvious why, wasn't it? However, I did start to read my father's books on the first proxy war of the Cold War – the Korean War (25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953)<sup>3</sup> The cause of the war was explained by father as the fault of the Yellow Peril – the Chinese – who did not value life but wanted to crush the free people of South Korea and enslave them. We could not let that happen, could we? The remoteness of the conflict did not help me to make much sense of it all but we, brave Brits, were fighting and dying there. We were suffering at the hands of savage orientals whose sadism contrasted so strongly with our Anglo rectitude. There were accounts of regiments such as the Glorious Gloucesters in the Battle of the Imjin River, South Korea. (22–25 April 1951).<sup>4</sup> *The Edge Of The Sword* by Anthony Farrar-Hockley (1954) told this remarkable tale with great narrative verve. It seemed almost unbelievable to this ten-year old. The story gripped me as images of wave after wave of inexorable foes flitted across the book:

The attackers enter: hundreds of Chinese soldiers clad in cotton khaki suits; plain, cheap, cotton caps; rubber-soled canvas shoes upon their feet; their shoulders, chests and backs criss-crossed with cotton bandoliers of ammunition: upon their hips, grenades – rough stick grenades so like the Boche 'potato masher', but inferior. Brown eyes, dark eyes beneath the long peaks of their caps peer forward to the back of whatsoever 'comrade' they are meant to follow. Those in the forefront of the battle wear steel helmets that are reminiscent of the Japanese. Their weapons – rifles, carbines, 'burp' guns, and Tommy guns that we supplied to Chiang Kai-Shek – are ready in their hands. Behind, on mule or pony limbers, are drawn their guns and ammunition... The hundreds grow to thousands on the river banks as, padding through the night, they close with us: eight hundred Glosters stand astride the road to Seoul – the road the Chinese mean to clear at any cost.

It was shortly after that my father suggested I read Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. One wet Sunday in the winter of 1955 I started to read what sounded like a mysterious, challenging book. Three years later I was still having nightmares about the murder. That was hardly surprising:

He unbuttoned his coat and freed the axe from the noose, but did not yet take it out altogether, simply holding it in his right hand under the coat. His hands were fearfully weak, he felt them every moment growing more numb and more wooden. He was afraid he would let the axe slip and fall... A sudden giddiness came over him.



But what has he tied it up like this for?" the old woman cried with vexation and moved towards him. He had not a minute more to lose. He pulled the axe quite out, swung it with both arms, scarcely conscious of himself, and almost without effort, almost mechanically, brought the blunt side down on her head. He seemed not to use his own strength in this. But as soon as he had once brought the axe down, his strength returned to him. The old woman was as always bareheaded. Her thin, light hair, streaked with grey, thickly smeared with grease, was plaited in a rat's tail and fastened by a broken horn comb which stood out on the nape of her neck. As she was so short, the blow fell on the very top of her skull. She cried out, but very faintly, and suddenly sank all of a heap on the floor, raising her hands to her head. In one hand she still held 'the pledge.' Then he dealt her another and another blow with the blunt side and on the same spot. The blood gushed as from an overturned glass, the body fell back. He stepped back, let it fall, and at once bent over her face; she was dead. Her eyes seemed to be starting out of their sockets, the brow and the whole face were drawn and contorted convulsively. He laid the axe on the ground near the dead body and felt at once in her pocket (trying to avoid the streaming body) – the same right hand pocket from which she had taken the key on his last visit.

...Meanwhile there was a perfect pool of blood. All at once he noticed a string on her neck; he tugged at it, but the string was strong and did not snap and besides, it was soaked with blood.

– Fyodor Dostoevsky, 'Crime and Punishment' (1866), Chapter Seven,  
translated by Constance Garnett [1914]



*The Knole (1875)* <sup>5</sup>



*St Clements Church, St Clements Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth.*

The first owner of the Knole was Edmund Christy of the hat and towel family who, in 1872, commissioned the architect John Dando Sedding to design The Knole which was then built by a local man, John Toogood. In fact, John Sedding and John Toogood received two commissions from Edmund Christy as they also designed and built St Clements Church further along Knole Road that was largely funded by Christy. He provided some £30,000 for the land, the design, construction and completion of St Clements in addition to building simultaneously his own house at The Knole. He even paid for the Vicar for whom he provided an income of £283 per annum. The project also included a Vicarage, St Clements School with a schoolhouse for the Master and a pair of cottages for the Curates although the source of the funding of these items is uncertain. Furthermore, for his own house at The Knole, no expense was spared in the design or decoration.<sup>6</sup>

At around eight I needed money so I auditioned for the choir at St Clement's Church. Early in the summer hols I presented myself expecting old Cockerell, the vicar, to be there on his own. His reputation for dancing round the graves at midnight with newly dug up corpses seemed a little far-fetched as this mumbling surplice asked: "What would you like to sing?" On cue, the entire choir filled the room. I chose *The Lord is My Shepherd* and unaccompanied I launched myself on my three month career as a chorister. Turning out on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays



was tolerable because of the clouds of incense, the deep profundity of Cockerell making the mystery of this high church pure theatre – priceless. I always noticed his scraggy neck: he was well named. Bearing down on the church was the nunnery, the House of Bethany – two storeys of human storage: flitting like bats across the windows and along faintly discerned corridors. Occasionally clutches of earnest lady bats would emerge from the walled community to swish along the road on some secular outing. I always wanted to talk to them, learn their secret ways, crack their spiritual code, befriend them. Did I think that mother church could give me a mother to love from one of these pious ladies? Boy found needy.

Bournemouth was a delightful place in which to grow up. It was also essential to leave such a sleepy and seedy place as soon as possible!<sup>7</sup>

Faisal, the son of a retired Iranian diplomat, paraded his rag-tag army of four to eight year olds each day up and down our secluded road. His soldiers carried various lengths of oddly assorted wooden sticks or poles, some of which doubled as broom handles. The occasional car would slow to allow Faisal to direct his men to the camber side, temporarily allowing the troops to stand at ease, as he saluted the motorist with youthful fervour. I always hoped my father would catch sight of me and be proud. After all he had been a warrior in the air in far off Egypt. Like many early entrants to the RAF, he found civilian life deeply unsatisfying after the war. As a young man, his life in Egypt in the 1920s and 30s had been rich and fulfilling: friendship with the daughter of the French Ambassador; a varied round of sport from rugby, fencing and swimming to sand yachting: just living for flying.

Cold, austere, post-war Britain, an altruistic wife-later to become 'The Angel of the Dropouts' – and two children, could not compete with the driven, absorbing pace of life in Egypt. Like many others, he resorted to the proxy life of the RAF Club, reliving exotic times with his drinking buddies, often arriving home to the lash of my mother's tongue which habitually spat out 'Monique!' That always hotted things up. From my listening post, hands over my ears, I would retrace my steps back to my bedroom fortress, pulling the pillow tightly over my head to blot out the distant sounds of war. Late one evening, the usual sparring match was interrupted by an arterial fountain of blood that spurted six feet into the air from my mother's burst ankle ulcer. My father, snatched back to marital

duty, grabbed a basin to catch the blood which uncooperatively wavered about in an ungainly parabola. He zigzagged about in what became, in retrospect, a comedy sketch worthy of the Marx Brothers. At the time it was pure horror. The artery was tied off, the doctor called and a chastened air filled the scene. Mother: 1 Father: 0. Father found wanting.

At about nine I started to read through my mother's luridly illustrated medical books, including the psychiatric tomes. After contracting smallpox, anthrax, various skin cancers and all the STDs including the terrifying syphilis, I sifted through the phobias with their wonderful names and stunning disabilities. Rather boringly my early phobias were tied to actual experiences. Unknowingly, I had already experienced katagelophobia, fear of ridicule, when I had to recite *The Death of Cock Robin* to a family gathering and later when acting as standard bearer for the cubs. My First Recitation aged three years and nine months was in 1949. It was Christmas and relatives crowded round me. Someone had requested that I recite *Little Robin Redbreast*. Obviously whoever it was knew I had practised it the previous day. I so wanted to glow like a star and please my parents. I had an audience. It was hot. I was very hot. I started, faltered, recovered, stalled. Prompted, I managed to stumble to the end. I had discovered stage fright!

Little Robin Red breast sat upon a tree,  
Up went pussy cat and down went he;  
Down came pussy, and away Robin ran;  
Says little Robin Red breast, "Catch me if you can".  
Little Robin Red breast jumped upon a wall,  
Pussy cat jumped after him and almost got a fall;  
Little Robin chirped and sang, and what did pussy say?  
Pussy cat said, "Meeow!" and Robin jumped away.

First, the death of my friend in the cooling tower<sup>8</sup> invited hydrophobia for a few days. I became electrophobic after lightning smashed our dining room window one Saturday afternoon then eremophobic one Saturday evening when my parents went out for a fund raiser. Examinations made me kakorraphophobic and scholionophobic coupled with sleepless nyctophobia. An aggressive wasp caused sphskophobia and being swept into the sea by a gigantic freak wave, whilst walking along the beach to Boscombe Pier, led to thalassophobia. On a family holiday in Yugoslavia, I developed gephyrophobia crossing a rope bridge over a ravine.

Granny Munday's insertion of my nearly severed finger into neat Dettol prompted odynophobia as the pain made me nearly faint. Treading on a viper at Sandbanks resulted in ophidiophobia while heath fires made me pyrophobic. Nighttime manifestations of spirits labelled me sciophobic and for a brief period my superstitious phase made me triskaidekaphobic if the number 13 appeared in my life. At university I attended an interesting lecture entitled 'From Musophobia to Trophobia' which rather brought back the phobic theme!

## ENDNOTES

1. The phrase "the iron curtain" was used during this speech but the term had already been used in several previous letters from Churchill to Truman. It typified the division of Europe into East and West.
2. The Cold War, broadly dated from 1947 to 1991, was an intense stand-off between the Western Bloc, dominated by the United States with NATO, and the Eastern Bloc, dominated by the Soviet Union through its Warsaw Pact. After combining to defeat Hitler's Germany, the USSR and the U.S.A. were left as the two competing super-powers whose mutual antagonism was based on profound ideological differences-very loosely capitalism v. communism. The Cold War was conducted through proxy wars and traditional and nuclear arms races. Neither side wanted to exchange nuclear weapons and relied on the concept of détente to avoid mutually assured destruction. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the key reforms of perestroika ('reorganization', 1987) and glasnost ('openness', c.1985). There followed a generally peaceful revolution: finally, the decline of Soviet power was symbolized by the destruction of the Berlin Wall, leading to the break-up of the Soviet empire and freedom for its Eastern bloc satellite countries.
3. This war between the Republic of Korea (South Korea), supported by the United Nations, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), supported by the People's Republic of China, was the legacy of the Allies' attempt to impose stability at the end of World War II in a contentious and disputed area. The Korean Peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel, with U.S.A. military forces defending the southern sector and Soviet military forces defending the northern sector. In 1948, the North established a 'communist' government, while the South established a 'democratic' government. The 38th parallel increasingly became a contentious border between the opposing sectors of the divided Korean state. Unrest resulted in North Korean forces invading South Korea on 25 June 1950 when the United States and other countries passed a Security Council resolution initiating military intervention in Korea. It became one of the Cold War's proxy conflicts later to involve China which fought on the side of the North. Peace was agreed on the 27 July 1953 when the border became the 38th Parallel establishing the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), just over two miles wide.
4. The most brutal battle fought by British troops since World War Two. The

British 29th Brigade, including The Gloucestershire Regiment, fought the vastly superior numbers of the Chinese 63rd Army. 800 'Glorious Glosters' kept at bay 10,000 Chinese troops for three nights, which allowed UN forces enough time to prevent the Chinese capture of the southern approach.

5. The Knole (1875) where we had great fun as children in the early 1950s became a masonic centre: Freemasons' Hall, Knole Road, Bournemouth, BH1 4DH. Description: Church of St Clement, Grade: I, Date Listed: 5 May 1952, English Heritage Building ID: 101831; Location: 12 St Clement's Road, Bournemouth BH1 4EB.

1871-3, J.D. Sedding's first major church, tower added 1890-3 after Sedding's death, redesigned above 1st floor level by Henry Wilson. Tower has west doorway in recess under big cusped segmental arch with rubble spandrels (church and tower otherwise of smooth ashlar); 8-light west window with Crucifixion sculpture b. F W Pomeroy over ogee lights and foliage-carved sill, 3 2-light windows to each face of belfry with sculptured medallions on transom, openwork traceried battlements between octagonal turrets on corner buttresses (foliage corbels); bigger stair turret at north-east, central Hertfordshire spike spirelet. Church has north aisle with 3-light windows (west window high up) on continuous sill over moulded plinth, far-projecting castellated lead spouts on brackets to gutter, north porch with statue in gable and intricate iron gates. North chapel (Lady Chapel) has deep flat parapet pierced with small quatrefoils; small flat-headed lancets with ogee lights set between gabled buttresses with set-offs, 4-light east window also flat-headed. Tall 2-light windows between buttresses in south wall of nave. South-east vestry of red brick (small Tudor-tye bricks) with stone dressings: big stone chimney with vertical ribbing and traceried buttresses on west gable, 5-light window to south. Higher organ chamber and oratory, with similar brickwork and chimney, flat parapet. Passage to vicarage, against brick and stone east wall, has timber white-painted cloister openings, 4-centred, under lean-to; hipped roof to entrance lobby. Link to vicarage now broken by siting of new vicarage (1960) further east.

Interior has 5-bay north arcade: acutely pointed arches with thin mouldings carried continuously down into slender piers, interrupted only by thin stringcourse at capital level. Blind frieze of Perp stone panelling at clerestory level, kingpost roof on bowed tie beams. Tall tower arch, west window glass by Holiday circa 1895. North aisle roof also has big tiebeams, on timber wall shafts. Octagonal font with sculptured panels, on steps, cover has crocketed spire over gabled foliage panels. Pulpit also octagonal and with sculptured panels, on octagonal base, railing to steps with Art Nouveau finials added circa 1890. Brass eagle lectern on square base with intricate parapet and pair of statues, made by Barkentin and Krall, 1876. Window over pulpit by Bryans and Webb, tablet to Rev C.H. Thompson (died 1899). Good bronze bas-relief of Rev W. Purton (died 1891), probably by F.W. Pomeroy flanked by quattrocento angels. Timber lobby to north door with linenfold panelling and foliage cornice. Chancel arch (no capitals) encloses elaborate rood screen on pattern of that at Berkeley, Glos: wide spread segmental arch with traceried spandrels under straight cornice, interrupted central by narrow ogee arch with elaborate iron gates. Chancel pointed wagon roof on angel frieze, stencil patterns on walls painted over 1969) dominated by huge reredos of

1882–3, carved by G.W. Seale: Adoration of Magi flanked by elaborate niches, pinnacled canopy over central gilt cross (original and very fine); east wall to left and right has two tiers of statues under vaulted coving. East window glass by Bryans and Webb (Kempe style), circa 1899, 2 remarkable south windows, circa 1895, by Christopher Whall, brown and silver wash effect. Choir stalls with poppy heads circa 1875, sedilia of timber, with foliage-carved round arches, probably by Brindley, circa 1905, Lady Chapel has stone screen of three 3-light openings with transom, plus ogee arch, stone parolose screen matched by that under organ (wrought-iron balcony) on south of chancel. Lady Chapel walls panelled in stone, reredos with Lily flanked by Annunciation and Expulsion from Garden with pinnacled statue at each end, wagon-roofed ceiling with criss-cross ribs, glass by Westlake. Elaborate encaustic tiles in chancel and chapel, tile patterns also in nave.

Church of St Clement, with Churchyard Cross and Graves, Vicarage Walls, St Clement School, Schoolhouse and No 12A, form a group. It is a Grade 1 listed Victorian Gothic building by Sedding. The Parish Hall was once the chapel attached to the House of Bethany and is grade 2 listed. (1874–1875). Architect Richard Norman Shaw. A small day school was opened on land adjacent to the church in 1871 by Miss Emma Mordaunt, and next to it she also established a small orphanage, called St Clements Home. In 1872 the Sisters of Bethany, an Anglican Order, purchased six acres of land, also close to the church, and three of the Sisters took over the School and the Orphanage. Building was commenced in 1874 of a new orphanage to accommodate about a hundred girls, and a convent for the community of the Sisters. The solemn dedication of the premises took place on 2nd October 1875. The convent was extended by a further wing in the 1880's, and an infirmary added in 1897. The orphanage was run down in 1939, and the convent was closed in the 1970s.

The school was continued until about 1927. When it was closed, the girls attended St Clement's School. It is one of R Norman Shaw's boldest works, built largely of concrete with W H Lascelles as the contractor. The original orphanage wing, running east-west, is of two storeys with attics and as a ground floor of concrete and a tile hung first floor. At the North West corner is the three storey gate tower which is of brick with stone dressings. Attached to it is a two storey wing which has a tile hung upper floor. The 1880 convent wing at right angles is also of two storeys with attic and has a concrete lower storey with tile hanging above. The chapel and cloister were added in 1928–9 by William G. Newton and Partners. It has been redeveloped for housing.

Bournemouth was a delightful place in which to grow up. It was also essential to leave such a sleepy place as soon as possible! The somnolent atmosphere of the town, induced by the pines, ozone and comfortable location, was perfectly captured by the Duke of Argyll:

“A friend of mine used to say that a Man's account of an Event or of a Place was History, and that a Woman's description was merely Her Story. But Her story often brings more home to you that which you desire to know in regard to climate and local interest than does the Man's History! And Women will speak gratefully to you of the shelter given by the Pinewoods in Winter, and of their pleasant resinous smell in summer. For anyone not in the strongest health a Lady's impressions of a place are more to be trusted than those of a healthy Man, if we wish to know how enjoyment,

peace of mind and ease of body, may be sought and found. Let me then briefly from the point of view of the 'weaker vessels' repeat what I have heard from them ; and if any of them could find healthy occupation and interest, the task should be much easier for others who have not women's delicacy of health, and are able to do more, and work harder, whether for amusement or profit or variety. We must leave the summer yachting and the winter sports, the fishing and the riding, to those who can well shift for themselves and obtain as much as they can care to have or afford to have – to those who can find out for themselves what every corner in England may afford. We must become mentally short-sighted and for the moment think only of what can be seen by the easy means of the motor car, or by the aid of the humbler carriage and pair. Limited to this, how full may life still be of interest, If the lessons of pleasant country houses, of historic churches, of antiquarian researches, of excursions by steamer to other parts of the mainland coast and to the Isle of Wight, be happily inquired after and learnt.”

Bournemouth is indebted for its climatic advantages, the composition of its soil, the formation of its cliffs and chines, the configuration of the land, and its proximity to the sea. In Bournemouth, as Thomas Hardy has said, with a narrower application, we have 'a new world in an old one.' It is equally true as he has applied it: this 'glittering novelty' which we now call Bourne-mouth has grown up “on the very verge of a tawny piece of antiquity.”

“Within the space of a mile from its out-skirts every irregularity of the soil was prehistoric, every channel an undisturbed British trackway; not a sod having been turned there since the days of the Caesars.” See: *The History of a Modern Health and Pleasure Resort*, Chas. H. MATE, J.P., F.J.I. and Chas. RIDDLE, Borough Librarian. With Preface by HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ARGYLL, With illustrations of Bournemouth, Old and New, Maps and Estate Plans. Bournemouth (1910)

Electric power for the trams was provided by the Borough Council's own power station in Southcote Road. It had four coal fired steam generators with their own cooling tower.

# The End of Sweet Rationing

The really important date in my childhood is when sweet rationing ended a month short of my eighth birthday in February, 1953. The local sweetshop near the Southcote Road Post Office<sup>1</sup> became a Mecca for all the local children: ragamuffins of all ages, shapes, classes streamed to the honey-pot as if summoned by the Confectioners' Federation Pied Piper. Their aim was to empty the shelves heaving with enticing jars of sweets: blackjacks, fruit salads, Barratt's Sherbet Fountain with a stick of liquorice, Pontefract cakes, and liquorice allsorts, raspberry drops, dolly mixture, sherbet lemons, toffee, a penny pipe, a Mars bar, fizzy jelly fish, sour apples, spangles. They were four for a penny – a farthing each. Barratt's sweet cigarettes, made of some strange chalky confection with red ends, allowed the adventurous to pretend to smoke like nearly all the adults around them. The novelty, the abandon, the luxury: all children became royally feted and stuffed with quarters of this and that.<sup>2</sup> Chocolate smiles, chocolate teeth, gob stoppers stretching mouths to their limits, with toffee apples as the favourite tooth crackers par excellence. The ending of sugar rationing the following year compounded the problem as people's habit of taking four or five spoonfuls of sugar per cup of tea or coffee grew apace. Spoons could stand upright in sugar filled cups. The NHS Dental Service, subsequently, extracted rotten teeth on an industrial scale leading historically to the culture of extraction that was exploited by Australian dentists in the 60s and 70s – popularly called as the Marianas Trench method.<sup>3</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Southcote Road Post Office and the sweet shop, on the other side of the road, were some distance from the former house of Chang (1846–1893) who had been a popular character in Victorian Bournemouth.
2. Sweets were sold loose in *quarters* (four ounces) in brown paper bags from ornate brightly coloured sweet jars which stretched heavenwards in row after row of crowded shelves. The pipe was a bit of Spanish liquorice with a thick bowl on the end with red sprinkled decoration.
3. *Improving NHS Dentistry* Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Health by Command of Her Majesty July 1994 LONDON: HMSO CM2625

p.1, Foreword, 'There has been a substantial improvement in the oral health of the population since NHS dentistry began in the 1940s... In the post-war years there was widespread untreated dental disease and the oral health of the nation was poor. Then, people did not expect to keep their teeth for life. The NHS dental service of the 1940s, 1950s and even the 1960s was faced with an enormous demand for surgical and restorative treatments. Sadly, the outcome for many people was to have their natural teeth replaced with dentures in middle age or even earlier. The fee per item base of the system rewarded dentists for each and every treatment given.' This fee system was abused by Australian dentists who collected huge NHS fees for unnecessary drillings and fillings which created whole rows of fillings..The *Marianas Trench* epithet became a by-word for poor dentistry.

In *NHS Services in England An independent review* led by Professor Jimmy Steele June 2009, the legacy of excessive sugar in people's diets, poor oral hygiene and the culture of extraction above conservation was strikingly evident:

p. 11, 'By the time of the first survey of adult dental health in 1968 ...nearly half the population had no teeth at all and, even among the relatively young, there were many who wore complete dentures.'

## Harmless Childhood Pastimes

On desultory summer days, I would dig up 3.03 bullets buried by my father and attempt to fire them by the simple expedient of placing them in a vice and striking the pin with a hammer: it never worked. However, a remote bead had obviously been drawn on my delinquency and the bullets disappeared. Then the fashion for four wheeled carts swept all before it. Packs of carts patrolled the area like hungry predators as each boy sought to be top banana. The creak of cart wheels became an ominous warning to upright, god-fearing neighbours just like the leper's bell of old or the tumbrel to the gallows.

The alley became the ultimate test of boyhood with the real risk of oblivion at the bottom if you met a car passing by along the road. If a 'no brakes' challenge was issued, so be it. No boy could refuse and remain a contender. Even the recent death of William in the cooling tower water – we used as our delightfully warm swimming pool – failed to rewrite the rules: death or glory. No doubt this mantra was understood by boys all over the country. The ever present imprint of six brutal years was stamped in us: *never surrender, never give in; winner takes all. Life is not for the tame. Stand up for yourself.* And so we did. At seven we expected teachers, men like Mr Parker, scarred by the war, to smash us over our hands with a steel ruler whenever we literally blotted our copy books. The result, of course, was a Rorschach type-inkblot. What dark world of violence and loathing would a psychologist have found in Mr Parker by forcing him to interpret our inkblots?

The nadir of our carting days – for our long suffering neighbours – was the day of the big crash when a hard fought for race ended with five carts simultaneously hitting a long fence atop a curving corner wall. Both collapsed – in what seemed slow motion – hanging tentatively before the rush of gravity, the crash, the dust cloud. The howl of a female gardener on the other side. We scarpered. Father paid up. Carts were abandoned: carts were scrapped

## HMS *Vanguard*'s visit to Bournemouth, 1951

There in Bournemouth Bay was the magnificent HMS *Vanguard* and my father had arranged for myself and a small group of friends to visit it. We six-year olds were told that this huge battleship, the thirteenth of that name, had one of the oldest and most illustrious names in the Royal Navy and had proudly earned some fifteen honours from the Armada to Jutland. Its tonnage of over 40,000 included 14,741 tons just for armour and protection. It was massively impressive and we could not wait to get on board.



HMS *Vanguard*

Adults were debating the advisability of attempting a boarding as we gazed on surf crested waves pummelling the ship. Was it too dangerous for us to board the ship? No. At last, after a delay we assembled on the pier watching the cutter head for us in huge swells. We immediately got very wet as the spray soaked us as soon as we set off. But that was nothing as we approached the behemoth. Everything was moving violently in different directions and it looked impossible to jump across the heaving boarding platform to the waiting arms of the crew as the cutter lurched up and down. One, two, three and away we went observing the surging, boiling water beneath us.

The sheer scale of everything astounded us: massive guns towered over the deck, each capable of delivering death and destruction, on demand, several miles distant; cavernous holds contained acres of damp swinging hammocks as the ship rocked to the waves; we saw hundreds of crewmen about their business as we toured the ship above and below until finally we were delivered to the officers' mess and a splendid tea when we were fussed over by jolly tars amused by the antics of their small guests.

# The Cold War in Hampshire

## 1959 A Visit to Sopley

On cycle trips with friends around Christchurch in the summer hols in 1959, we came across several whirling radar dishes in a large field at a place called Sopley. This was the Cold War in action. The following year my father announced that we were visiting a special radar installation and the mystery of Sopley was revealed. The scale of the overhead operation was suggested by the sheer number of radar dishes whirling purposefully and, to a child, spookily day and night but the underground reality was truly remarkable. We entered the complex to be greeted by the sight of teams of radar operatives monitoring screens in a huge underground facility. It was a scene from a Hollywood film.

So how did this installation come to be in rural Hampshire and how many people were involved in running it?

In January 1958, with the expansion of the Air Traffic Control system in the UK, a Squadron Leader, the officer commanding the Air Traffic Control Research Unit (ATCRU) and several controllers arrived at Sopley to set up an ATCRU Area Radar Service covering the Home Counties, the Midlands, South Wales and the West Country and Southern Radar was formally established on 1 April 1959. In 1958, the School of Fighter Control moved from Hope Cove to Sopley together with a Special Tasks Cabin, to look after both the military and civil research and development requirements and also to afford control facilities for fighter interception practice for RAF Chivenor; it was collocated with the ATC unit.

No. 15 Signals Unit was formed with effect from 28 October 1959 from the Air Traffic Control radar section at RAF Sopley.

The operational tasks in order of priority were as follows:

- a) Assistance to Air Traffic Control Centres in the control of emergency incidents
- b) Military aircraft crossing civilian airways
- c) Extended approach control to selected airfields
- d) Surveillance of military aircraft in transit.



*Part of the Operations Room underground*



*Overground radar*

15 Signals Unit comprised 1 Squadron Leader, 3 Flight Lieutenants, 3 Flying Officers/Flight Lieutenants, 1 Warrant Officer, 3 Flight Sergeants, 3 Corporal clerks, 11 Aircraftsmen clerks. The unit was parented by RAF Sopley.

In July 1959, the Air Defence reporting element of the Unit moved to RAF Wartling releasing extra radar facilities for the ATCRU use and on 1 November 1959 the ATCRU took over from Air Defence the responsibility for the Special Tasks cell.

After the war, in 1954, a major re-engineering of the site occurred when it became known formally as Royal Air Force Sopley, the home of Southern Radar and the Joint Air Traffic Control School. The radar station was housed in a deep underground bunker under a field adjacent to the war time radar station, whilst quarters were built in Bransgore for its married personnel and a large domestic site was constructed between Bransgore and Sopley next to the site of Merryfield farm. During the 1960s and 1970s civil and military air traffic control officers worked and trained together at the site which also retained an air defence and special tasks role including that of supporting Research and Development flying programmes from Farnborough and Boscombe Down and the early Concorde flight trials. With the full opening of the London Air Traffic Control Centre, Southern radar was one of several Air Traffic Control units that were surplus to requirements and Royal Air Force Sopley closed in 1974.



*Sheena Clark (née Gooderson) 1909-1990*

*‘They need help, not to be banished,’ says Sheena  
– Evening Echo, Bournemouth, 1977*

## Angel of the drop-outs

*Bournemouth Evening Echo, 22 September 1977*

**The guardian angel of the drop-outs and homeless people of Bournemouth has hit out at those who have condemned the local unfortunates.**

‘Widow Sheena Clark, who has spent the past 20 years helping the distressed and needy in Bournemouth thinks those who are shouting about drop-outs and winos would do more good by lending them a helping hand.

‘It’s wrong simply to say we’ve got to push them out of the town. Instead we should be helping them. The only ‘sin’ of many of these people is that they don’t have a home to go to,’ she said.

Mrs Clark admitted that Bournemouth did have a problem with what she calls ‘sick and vulnerable souls’, but local residents angrily term them drop-outs and winos.

But she says such social problems will not be solved until people realise that unfortunates need help not banishment to the outskirts of town, as some have suggested.

### CASH, TOO

‘We have a problem which we must solve in a communally responsible way. We must find homes for these people in the town and help them,’ she said.

And to find the solutions, Mrs Clark says not only the active co-operation of the community is needed but a lot of cash as well.

The friend of the ‘vulnerable souls’ opened her home to help the needy over 21 years ago. An elderly matron living alone and in hunger was rescued by Mrs Clark.

‘I had her at my home immediately I knew she needed help. Ever since then I have had people here and helped whenever I could’.

The door of her very large house is always open and Mrs Clark has lost count of the number who have taken refuge over the years.

### OTHER HOMES

Her guests, as she prefers to call them, at the moment include a pensioner who was evicted from her home days ago and had nowhere else to live; a man in his early twenties unable to read and write and in need of a roof over his head while he attended literacy classes; and a 90 year-old man unable to walk because of partial disablement and who has no one else in the world to turn to for help apart from Mrs Clark.’





*Photograph by Nick Dawe from the article 'Closing Time' which appeared in Intelligent Life (Autumn 2008)*

H. & S.J. Rowan, Secondhand Bookshop  
459 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset  
BH1 4Ad (120) 239-8820

Mr Rowan has been in this part of Bournemouth for many years and specializes in buying and selling maps and books – antiquarian, arts, aviation, military history, atlases and local interest. Like all good dealers, he advertises in local papers offering to visit people's homes to view books for sale.

## Harold Rowan (1932–2011) – a tribute

Richard Grenville Clark

Rowan Books always had a slightly hippyish appearance when Harold's wife was alive. She draped both sides of the front windows with jewellery and various accessories – achieving a decorative, even web-like display – which successfully enticed low-budget Boscombites into the shop. Her assiduous and courteous manner attracted all types looking for a bargain: something new, something different. Her voice was always friendly in a solicitous way; her matronly figure comforting and reassuring.

There tended to be two distinct throngs of customers: book people and ladies looking for adornment. Harold held court at the furthest end of the shop protected by the counter and book barricades carefully counter-balanced for maximum stability; this barrier was occasionally subverted by some over eager punter keen to winkle out a book they had spotted lower down. The mahogany case held the rarer stock-dully gleaming leather and gilt volumes of all sizes. Certain types of customer assumed an almost possessive over-familiarity with Harold as they blocked the narrow corridor next to the counter, their shopping braced around their legs adding to the impasse. Invariably, they were over-loud and indulged in the game of scrutinising customers who approached Harold. His expression was old-fashioned and his appearance was decidedly 1940s and 1950s – the well-worn cardigan over a shirt and tie and baggy brown trousers, the craggy teeth which had been without dental care for decades, the slightly staring eyes. He often grinned at his own comments and asides rarely straying into the customers' territory-but aware of what was happening. In the photograph we can see a very spruced up Harold with nicely polished shoes.

When his wife died, he confessed that he could not cook. Harold poignantly described his futile attempts to cook a frozen meal which he ended up throwing out. Later his daughter helped supply him with cooked meals.

I first discovered Rowan's bookshop after lunching at the Lantern Hotel, a few doors along, and made a point of popping in when in Boscombe. In those days, I used to use Comin's in the town centre, Goldthorpe's and Orchard's in Westbourne Arcade, the Ashley

Bookshop in the former church at Boscombe, and others, but such places are becoming much harder to find now. Harold Rowan will live on in good memories and in my library.

ROWAN HAROLD (of Rowan's bookshop) Passed away peacefully at the Royal Bournemouth Hospital on 8 April 2011, aged 79 years. Sadly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral Service at Christchurch Cemetery Chapel, Jumpers Road on Thursday 21 April 2011 at 2 pm. Flowers or donations for and made payable to the RSPCA may be sent to The Brian Wilton Funeral Home, 156 Tuckton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3JX. Tel 01202 428536. Bournemouth Echo, 16 April 2011.

## Travellers' Tales

by *Angela Flanagan-Brown and Anita Brownjohn*



*Angela Flanagan-Brown*

I was born in Surrey and I have lived here all my life. I am married with two grown up children and three grandchildren. I come from a very musical family and can play the banjo, concertina, ukulele, guitar and the organ. My family and I have formed an Irish band called *The Flanagans*. We enjoy open mic nights and play at St Patrick Day events, usually in pubs or charity events.

Most of my working life has been spent working with children and for the past ten years I have been employed by a local authority to support Gypsy and Traveller families. (Gypsy Roma Travellers, Travellers of Irish heritage, Circus and Fairground). I help these families with everything to do with their children's education and much, much more!



*Anita Brownjohn*

My name is Anita Brownjohn and I was born in Redhill Surrey. I'm half Irish and proud of it! I attended Croydon college to study catering and hotel management; later I became a nurse and later still a teacher. I currently work with children aged 3 to 5 and their parents. I have two grown up children, one at home one living in London. I have lots of interests but I particularly like reading, walking and growing vegetables. I used to drive the Play Bus referred to in the tales.

I could not explain a typical day in my job as it just does not exist. Every day is different and unexpected issues crop up most days. Over these ten years I have met some wonderful characters who have shared their amazing life stories with me. I feel very privileged to have been accepted into these family's lives. Most of the things you see on the television and in the newspapers about Gypsies and Travellers are very negative, so part of my job is to educate people about Traveller culture and to put things right! Angela and I began working together on a Play Bus destined to visit mainly Traveller sites. The purpose of these visits was to take nursery education to children living in rural areas, focusing on the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The job was interesting, varied and sometimes a joy, sometimes stressful but never dull.

These Tales offer a little insight into what I do. These stories have actually happened but I have changed the names of the people involved.



*Angela with her father, Peter Flanagan*

## I. THE BODY IN THE CAR PARK

One morning after performing the many tedious but necessary bus checks we set off on one of our regular visits. When we arrived at the site we were most surprised to see a large marquee erected in the middle of the car park. There were a lot of men hanging around in small groups chatting and smoking. This was unusual as the men would normally be out working at this time of day. Some looked at us curiously, but otherwise we were ignored.

After setting up the bus, the first children arrived. We were intrigued to know what was going on, so we asked an older boy if there had been some kind of party at the week-end. He said quite matter of factly, "No, there's a body in there." We were at a loss for words. Eventually we had the sense to ask him why there was a body in the car park.

The boy told us his uncle had died and it was the women's turn to sit up with the body. Apparently 'sitting up' lasts three days and the men and women take turns separately to sit with the body. He added that, "you talk to and kiss it."

This was just before Christmas, so the bus was lit up like a Christmas tree with lights and decorations. The children had learnt to sing Jingle Bells and shake their hand-bells as they sang. It was a very strange day, the little children playing such a jolly song with the deceased right next door!

At the end of the session a mum came on to collect the children, we apologised profusely, saying we would not have turned up had we known.

Mum replied that she was glad we had come because it had given the children something to do, and then she added, "The hearse will be here in a minute!" This we decided was a good time to go!

## 2. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

We pulled up one day at a small Irish Traveller site, well out in the countryside. The site was mainly occupied by two of seven sisters, Missy and Maggie. The other sisters often visited with their families. The girls were a vision, all blonde, blue eyed, tanned and of varying heights and terribly religious. They fairly rattled with holy medals and relics.

Missy was the taller of the two sisters with four children. She would come on the bus sometimes, plonk herself down and talk with great passion about her babies and the love she had for them. Meanwhile the 'babies' would be roaming around barefoot and half naked with missing fingers swearing at one another.

Maggie was a lovely woman, gentle and thoughtful and the only one who ever offered us a cup of tea. She was most concerned about my loss of faith in God and the Catholic Church and presented me with a pink, plastic rosary all the way from Cancun. The children on the site really enjoyed coming on the bus and eagerly looked forward to our arrival. One particular afternoon there appeared to be more children than usual and I spotted a very small blonde girl lagging behind the others as they ran excitedly towards the bus.

As they tumbled on little Mikey explained that his cousins were over on holidays which accounted for the extra children. At that moment, the little girl who had been slower than the others began to mount the steps of the bus. We then realised the reason for her unsteadiness. She had no feet nor hands. We have to be honest and say we felt a sense of shock which we were trying to hide as the situation was so unexpected.

The children were completely unbothered and showed no awareness of the little girl's disability. Once aboard she set about playing with the toys and resources. We watched fascinated as she used her stumps just like hands and feet. She was so skilled and as quick as the others. She persevered with everything no matter how difficult until she mastered it. She never asked for help and nobody offered it including us! After a while Maggie came on the bus to offer us tea and she explained that Molly had contracted meningitis and as a result her hands and feet had to be amputated. We didn't know what to say. Maggie commented with pride how well Molly could manage. We discussed all her hospital treatment and the prosthetics she was due to be fitted with. Despite us not being prepared for Molly's visit, she was an inspiration to us.

## 3. CHARACTERS WE MET ALONG THE WAY

When we were not visiting sites we were cleaning and maintaining the bus at the depot where it was kept. There were a number of jobs we had to do, here are a few of them:

- Filling up the water tank.
- Emptying cleaning and refilling sand and water trays.
- Washing up paint pots and brushes.
- Cleaning and vacuuming the endless amounts of glitter, sand, Playdough, pasta, etc., etc.
- And our favourite, emptying the chemical toilet.

At the depot we met quite a few characters all working for the council in one way or another.

Firstly, there was the double act that we named the Greasy Motor Men, but were actually Billy and Bert but we ended up calling Bert, Bournemouth, because that is all he ever talked about. Bournemouth looked like a stereotypical front page picture of a serial killer in a blue boiler suit! He was a terrible flirt in a 'pervy' way; luckily Angela got most of his attention when he wasn't talking about Bournemouth. which apparently was where he lived. He was always promising to get us stuff on the cheap but never actually got us anything.

Billy, his sidekick, had an Irish accent you could cut with a knife and despite both of us coming from Irish backgrounds, we didn't understand much of what he said. So, we used to nod and laugh nervously whenever he spoke to us. Billy had an Italian wife with an equally strong accent so we often wondered about the conversations they would have at home.

Next door to our Play Bus was the Mobile Library operated by Dan and Janet. They were a friendly, helpful couple, but my God Dan was bitter about the council and some of the managers. In particular the headman of the maintenance department, whom Bob referred to as "The wanker!" It was always a bad day when he came to do his rounds and we never heard the end of it.

One very frosty morning we arrived to find the longest icicle in the world hanging off the bus waste water pipe. We were so impressed we had to take a photograph! We went to unlock the water tank but because it was so icy the key would not go in. After several failed attempts the dreaded maintenance man appeared from nowhere doing his rounds.

We were trying to explain to him about the key but we couldn't help

laughing because it all sounded like a *Carry On* film. "I can't get it in." "We've tried wiggling it and ramming it." Well you get the idea. He suggested warming the key up. Angela was holding the key out at the time when he walked over and held the other end of it. Bearing in mind the key was only two inches long, he and Angela were standing close together, he holding one end, Angela the other. Angela at this point was helpless with laughter, gasping out that they were having "a key moment." He did not appear to find this amusing, which we found even funnier.

Then, of course, there was Frank. Dear Frank. He actually looked and sounded just like Frank Butcher from *EastEnders* which is why we sometimes made the mistake of calling him Frank to his face on numerous occasions. His real name was Keith.

It was Keith's job to train us on a Banksman course teaching us how to support each other reversing and navigating the bus on site without using the mirrors. We were given a pair of absolutely huge, bright orange gloves and a very large high visibility jacket to wear. We looked comical to say the least!

Then Keith would shout abuse at us in a somewhat sergeant major fashion if we got things wrong. We didn't want to make a mistake because he generally scared the you know what out of us if we did.

He did go as far as saying that women were better drivers than men but you wouldn't guess that from the way he spoke to us.

Clive was the bus driving instructor, teaching us the whys and wherefores of bus driving. He was a much more laid back character who had recently divorced and who was living in a mobile home because his wife had taken everything he owned. He used to tell us the dreadful things his ex-wife used to do but without any real bitterness surprisingly.

He was a very patient teacher, never showing any fear or concern even when Anita was driving. Angela of course was a nervous wreck, white knuckles holding on tightly to the seat belt!

On about the third lesson Clive said we needed to fill up with fuel. Anita drove to the garage and pulled up to the pump. Clive jumped out the cab and went and lifted the diesel nozzle ready to fill up. We told him the bus took petrol. "Oh no," he said, "it's definitely diesel". We had our doubts and pointed out the sticker above the cap that said "PETROL". He reassured us that whoever had put the sticker there was wrong and the bus took diesel. He even went as far as telling us to remove the sticker. He filled the tank with diesel and Anita nervously

drove the bus back to the depot which was 5 minutes away.

When Clive left the depot, Angela phoned our manager and told her what had just happened. She told her that the bus most definitely took petrol and that we weren't able to go out in it until the tank had been drained.

#### 4. WE'RE GOING ON A CHILD HUNT

I was contacted by a school asking if I knew the whereabouts of Billy Jones as he had not returned to school after the summer holidays. I told the school I would do a home visit and let them know the outcome. It was a beautiful sunny September morning with that fresh September nip in the air and not a cloud in the sky.

I arrived on the site where Billy lived and made my way to plot number 21 which wasn't straight forward as not many of the plots were numbered and number 13 didn't even exist as it was deemed by the Traveller families as unlucky.

Finally, I stood in front of two huge iron gates that had seen better days. As I started to lift the long vertical bar to release the gates, the sound of barking started to get nearer and nearer. Then there, behind the gates stood five barking and growling dogs of all shapes, colours and sizes.

Luckily, I don't have a fear of dogs so I carried on trying to release the bar still being barked at very loudly. After a short while I had managed to release the gates and then tried to push them open. This was far from easy as the wheels on the base of the gate were slightly wonky and I could only open a gap about a foot wide.

Not wanting the dogs to escape I thought I would just have to try and slither through the gap. I managed to get half way through to the other side when I noticed that my jumper had got hooked onto a piece of wire that was poking out. I was now firmly attached to the gate with five mad barking dogs jumping up my legs. I thought to myself "What the hell am I doing? Most people would have seen the closed gate and the dogs and gone home, am I mad?" It made me think of that well known children's book "We're going on a bear hunt".

After what seemed ages, I managed to release myself from the grip of the gate and managed to walk down to the trailer where Billy lived with my now new friends jumping up at me. I reached the trailer and knocked on the door. By now the dogs had decided to bugger off and had totally disappeared as if by magic.

The door of the trailer was opened by a pretty young girl. “Hello” I said with a crazed grin on my face. “I’m from Traveller education, is your mum in?” “No sorry!” came the reply. GREAT I thought!

## 5. IT WASN’T ME

I was asked by a head teacher if I would take Sally the new home school link worker out on site to visit the Traveller parents of the children who attended the school, as the school had quite a high percentage of Travellers and the head teacher wanted a first point of contact i.e. Sally. I was happy to do this and arranged to pick Sally up Tuesday at 10 am.

Tuesday arrived and I picked Sally up from the school. She said she was a bit nervous as she had never been on to a Traveller site before and she didn’t know what to expect. I reassured her that it would be fine and she had nothing to worry about. On our drive there I advised her on some aspects of Traveller culture and some dos and don’ts. “Always offer to take your shoes off when entering the trailer or chalet” was one I told her. Most Traveller homes are scrupulously clean and tidy. When we arrived on site Sally seemed pleasantly surprised. “I thought they lived in a field!” she said embarrassingly.

Our first visit was to meet Mrs Smith. Her son Jimmy was in Year 2. We walked across to the trailer and I knocked on the door. Mrs Smith opened the door. I introduced Sally to her and she invited us in. Whilst mounting the step to enter the trailer I asked if I should take my boots off. “No, you’re ok, come in,” was Mrs Smith’s reply.

I’m not sure if Sally heard this as she slipped her shoes off and left them tidily on the step outside. We went in and waited to be seated. Sally told Mrs Smith about her role at the school and that if she had any concerns about Jimmy she could call her and Sally would hopefully be able to sort things out. After a few cups of tea and quite a long chat about this and that we said we had to visit other families on the site so got up to leave. I opened the trailer door and found two nonchalant looking dogs sitting upright next to the outside step. As I descended the step I noticed that one of Sally’s shoes was not there anymore. The two dogs didn’t move they just turned their heads as if to say “Nothing to do with us!”

“Sally!” I said with a slight concern to my voice “one of your shoes has gone”, I started searching around under the steps as Sally came out of the trailer looking slightly worried. Mrs Smith also came out

looking extremely puzzled and laughing nervously. She called her daughter Amy to help with the search for Sally’s shoe. The two dogs had managed to sneak off and were now nowhere to be seen.

We all searched everywhere near and around the trailer with no sign of Sally’s shoe.

Mrs Smith was extremely apologetic and said she was so embarrassed and she would tell the dogs off when they came back! Sally was doing very well at keeping calm and saying it was ok and not to worry. If they managed to find her shoe they could give it to Jimmy to bring in to school. We thanked Mrs Smith for her time and the tea, and then I helped Sally hop back to my car where we had a good laugh. I drove Sally home to get another pair of shoes. We didn’t manage to do any more visits that day.

I found out that the shoe was returned by Jimmy the next day. It was found under the trailer with quite a bit of dog slobber on it.

## 6. IT’S A FUNNY OLD JOB

One morning my colleague and I decided to do a spontaneous home visit to a Traveller family whose children had not returned to school that term. We knew the address but when we arrived it wasn’t obvious where their house was. We found a house which had flatbed trucks in the garden which we thought was a bit of a giveaway but the gates to the property were locked and there was no way of getting to the house. We shouted Hello through the gates a few times but the only response we got was a dog barking. We prowled around outside for a while laughing to ourselves about how strange our job was and then started to walk up the road towards a bus stop. There was a lady sitting at the bus stop who we thought we would ask if she knew where number 26 was.

“Excuse me”, I said

“We were wondering if you know where number 26 is along here.”

The elderly lady rose from the bus stop bench and said “Yes” she replied “it’s down along there and proceeded to point and walk down the road expecting us to follow.

We awkwardly started to follow her down the lane.

“Are you from the council?” she asked

“Well yes sort of” I replied laughing nervously.

“Can you help me with my pension?” She asked

She proceeded to inform us about her life and the issues she was



having with her pension and that the council weren't very helpful.

We told her that we worked in education and we didn't know anything about pensions and shouldn't she be getting back to the bus stop as she might miss her bus! Ignoring us she then proceeded to tell us about the family who live at number 26 and how nice they were. The now three of us stood outside the gates peering through whilst the lady chattered on. The dog was still barking.

We kept trying to interrupt the lady to remind her about the bus but to no avail. We must have stood and listened to the lady talk about this and that for about 15 minutes until we made a story up that we really had to go as we had to visit someone else and we would be late. We wished her luck with her pension and hoped she hadn't missed her bus.

"It's alright" She said "I'll go tomorrow instead!" We hastily walked away towards the car.

## 7. HOMEWARD BOUND

I arranged to take a colleague out to a Traveller site to introduce her to a family whose child she was supporting at school. Unfortunately, when we arrived on site and went to the family's trailer there was no one at home. We walked over a small fenced green area towards where I had parked my car. On that short journey we were inundated with dogs of all shapes and sizes. A small deluxe type dog, a Chihuahua, a Westie and a little black scruffy thing. They were all jumping up at us and one was trying to get in my handbag. We quickly got into my car and tried not to run any of them over. We drove out of the site relieved we hadn't hit any of them. As we drove down the lane I looked in the rear-view mirror to see them all bounding along behind us. It was like a scene from the film *Homeward Bound*! We laughed all the way back to the office.

Historically, Traveller parents wouldn't send their very young children to nursery because they didn't understand the importance of early year's education. They would put them into school when it was the law when they reached the age of 5 so you can imagine what a shock that was for the children.

At home the parents encourage their children to play outside as their trailers and chalets are scrupulously cleaned every day, so when the Play Bus came every week the children loved doing messy play like

cutting and sticking, painting and Playdough. Playing with water was a popular activity as water at home is used to clean and to cook with not for playing.



*Anita reading with a child*



*Child role playing*



*Child writing*



*Child sticking paper*

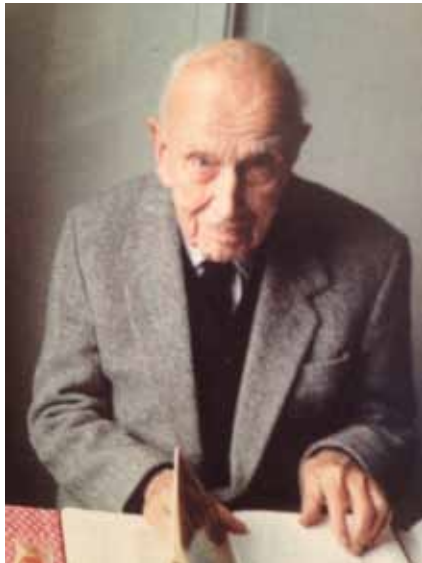
When parents brought their children along to us they would say "don't let him get dirty!" and we'd have to say "can you put him in some clothes that you don't mind getting a bit messy?" because the children would turn up immaculately dressed with patent leather shoes, beautiful dresses and tailored suits. We would panic if they got paint on themselves.

After the parents saw what we did on the Play Bus and we explained what the children were learning, word got around and many more parents brought their children along to play with us. Sometimes we would have 12 children in a session.

Now many more Traveller parents send their children to nursery and I personally feel it is because they had that experience of the Play Bus.



## Parading Persian History – a tribute to the Reverend Ralph Norman Sharp (1896–1995)



*Reverend Ralph Norman Sharp  
He was also Guy Descarrieres Sharp's younger brother of HMS E40 fame.*



*Olive, Hugh, Barbara, Norman and Margaret Sharp*

We were immensely privileged to have Norman preside over Tristram's naming ceremony at 55 Stoke Fields, Guildford, in 1982. Apart from knowing that he had translated important Persian texts into English and vice-versa, and that he was a clergyman as well as a senior member of the Sharp family, Norman's reputation as a remarkably personable man preceded him. Without hesitation he agreed immediately to carry out the naming ceremony instead of a christening. His presentation was fascinating-lucid, erudite and entertaining. He was genial and charming. It was a very memorable, very happy occasion, all the more important because of Sue's burgeoning illness.

Norman was born on the 23 June, 1896, the seventh child of John Emilius Ernest Steinberger Sharp, of Heugenot extraction and therefore a descendant of our most successful immigrants, and Mary Elizabeth Ballance. He attended prep school in Wimbledon and then Westminster School, well known for its promotion of the Classics. At Queens' College, Cambridge, he read Theology and Classics, followed by post-graduate studies at Ridley Hall. In 1922, he was ordained deacon then made a priest in 1923. The following year he was posted to Persia by the Church Missionary Society where at Yazd he designed, supervised and built a church in Persian architectural style using traditional mud bricks which the great flood of 1941 destroyed. In 1930, he returned to England where he married Barbara Carden who was working as a doctor. Soon after they returned to Yazd where they had four children: Frank, their first born, who died at eleven months from an accident, Olive Persica, Margaret and Hugh.

After eleven years in Yazd, Norman was posted to Shiraz and Barbara worked in the Christian Hospital there until 1945 when she returned to England. In Shiraz Norman designed and built the church of St Simon the Zealot whose main feature was what he called 'the Persian arch' – his favourite architectural feature. In all he built six churches at Shiraz, Qalit, Bushire, Kerman, Tehran and Isfahan.

The Reverend Ralph Norman Sharp spent nearly half a century of his life in Iran and 'He loved the country, its culture and its church'<sup>1</sup> In 1959 he was invited to become Assistant Professor of Old Persian and Pahlavi, Pahlavi University, Shirāz, Iran, 1962–67, where he taught Cuneiform, Old and Middle Persian.

He exemplified the very best Christian humility in his awareness of working in a foreign culture:

Persia, like all other countries, seeks the maintenance of its own culture and diffusion of its own influence, and the Church of Christ in Persia aims not to destroy but to fulfil, not to obliterate but to consecrate every beautiful and worthy expression of national genius which has been cherished in that age-old land.<sup>2</sup>



He was far ahead of his time in his sensitivity to a host culture. Sometimes he ignored orders from his superiors if they conflicted with his local, artistic or spiritual aims: Norman was not always a team-player.

'He was also a composer, organist and sympathetic scholar of Persian literature but his time in Iran was not always easy and he was put under house arrest during the Mossadeq period, in 1953.' He even managed to delay an expulsion order by the Mussadeq government after being accused of being a communist saboteur. Mussadeq's government fell and Norman stayed. Sharp also translated Persian poetry into English and a book by Sayyed Muhammad Taqi Mostafavi, the former director of the National Museum in Tehran, entitled *The Land of Pars*.<sup>3</sup>



*Olive and Norman in the 1990s*

One's abiding memory of Norman and his wife Barbara, sadly wheelchair-bound at the end, is of two highly civilized and generous people. Norman was still speeding about by train and bicycle nearly right up to his death.



*Tristram (1981–)*

Their oldest child, Dr Olive Persica Sharp, was a much loved GP in Cheltenham, a softly spoken lady who constantly under-played her fine intelligence and who always showed a keen interest in other people and their lives. She must have been amazed that her niece, Susan Clark, was the woman she had been called out to treat in a Chippenham hotel in the 1980s when Sue had holed up there with Tristram when she was ill.



*Tristram*



*Susan (1951 –)*

Olive thereafter never referred to that episode when she attended our summer garden parties, choosing the expense of the local B&B to being an inconvenience. We loved Olive a great deal and still miss her.

The local newspaper reported that Dr Sharp, who died in 2012, was a popular GP and set up a health centre at Broken Cross in Calne before moving to work at the Northlands Surgery. Calne's new mayor Heather Canfer is part of the Calne Community Transport Group and said Dr Sharp used to write the group a cheque every year.

She said: “Everyone knows her, she was very generous. We will be able to replace one of our buses which has cost us a lot of money lately in repairs.”

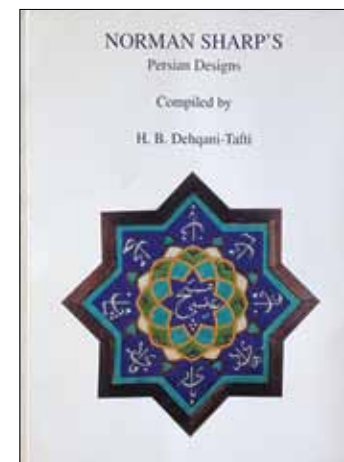
Olive left a legacy worth over £28,000 to Calne’s Community Transport Group. The group runs two buses which provide transport for the elderly and disabled, but because it is run by volunteers it relies on donations to keep them going. One of the buses had become uneconomical to run.<sup>4</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. Preface to *Norman Sharp's Persian Designs*
2. Unpublished lecture by Ralph Norman Sharp delivered in 1930 on ‘*The Development of Art and Architecture Overseas*’.
3. *Parading Persian History*
4. Gazette and Herald 2012

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# THE VILLA BEAU SOLEIL

by Jill Truefitt (1912–2009)



Jill Truefitt outside the Villa Beau Soleil, Bandol

At Puttenham Village Hall on 19th October, 2002, there was a 90th Celebration Birthday Lunch for Jill Truefitt attended by many of the village. It was symbolic of how well Jill was regarded by her community. Professionally, she lectured on weaving at the Royal College of Art. As described in the Preface, Jill was very involved in promoting Frederick Carter's work and RGC owes her a huge debt of gratitude. Sadly, she had to leave Fox Cottage, Puttenham, where she had lived for decades and move into The Queen Elizabeth Nursing Home, Guildford, where she died in 2009.

It was on re-reading Frederick Carter's searching, poetical book, *D.H. Lawrence and the Body Mystical*, that the account of his visit to Lawrence in Bandol, Provence, jumped out of the page. I was shortly to fly down to Marseille – only a few kilometres from Bandol – and here was an opportunity to find whether the house by the sea that he described still existed.

Frederick Carter, by reason of his liaison with my widowed mother-in-law, was in effect, one of our family. He would often talk of Lawrence, of their endless discussions, of the time when Lawrence stayed with him in Shropshire and of Frederick's own visit to Bandol in 1929.

Just as, in the book, Frederick minutely describes their walks in the Shropshire countryside, so does he give explicit detail of the location of the Villa Beau Soleil – almost as though he foresaw that I would be stirred to search for it. But more than sixty years had elapsed, and in that time Bandol must surely have changed.

So in June this year (1993) armed with an old photograph of the villa lent to me by Mr Richard Clark, who is writing a critical biography of Frederick Carter (having just completed a study of his etchings) I set off from Marseille to search it out – if it still existed. Somewhat daunted, I returned to Frederick's description.

...protected from direct sea-winds by a little pine wood that grew on the very verge of the rocky shore. Walking out from the town towards it the road took one behind the hotels and villas built into the rocks at the edge of the bay and then, coming out beside the water a little way from Villa Beau Soleil, became a lane – a path – by the water's edge.

So I drove through the narrow, twisting streets to a lane which followed the edge of the shore and yes! There was the pine wood,



the rocky shore and – its old nameplate still legible – the Villa Beau Soleil.

The quest had been exciting, the discovery was enthralling. Here was the very house, hardly changed, where Lawrence and Frederick had talked day after day and planned a joint book which, sadly, was never to materialize. Months later the desperately ill Lawrence was moved to a nursing home in Venice, where he died.

As I gazed enquiringly at the house, thinking only of those two figures from the past, the owner strolled from the rear garden and I introduced myself, explaining the reason for my interest. He was immediately helpful, inviting me to photograph freely. He already knew of D.H. Lawrence's occupancy, and volunteered that he had had a letter from the Mayor of Bandol, asking for permission to erect a plaque on the house commemorating Lawrence's stay. This would be done after completion of work that was then in progress – part of the house was indeed in scaffolding.

It is a prosaic little house, single story and rather squat – not at all the romantic, airy, Mediterranean residence that its name had led me to imagine. An arched cornice surmounts the roof, distinctive but not, to my eye, attractive. Below it is a new canopy in some pink substance which blends uneasily with the light terracotta stucco. Stone steps lead up to a terrace, and there have been some alterations to enlarge the sea-facing windows and make a front door. Formerly the entrance was at the side, where the shabby old door is still in place. At the rear, the garden is charmingly shaded by fruit trees, laden in June with peaches and cherries.

The site of the house is superb. A steep cliff path leads directly from the entrance gates down to the shore and the blue Mediterranean. The pinewood that Frederick described appears unchanged, but his field of narcissus alongside the villa that 'shone and flashed even on the dullest of days' has been replaced by villas which have crept ever closer and closer.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Anthony Gwyer-Gibbs (1944 – 2015) – a tribute

by Richard Grenville Clark



*Tony outside his  
Voltaire apartment  
Photo by Marilia*

Tony and I were colleagues and good friends at The Winston Churchill School, Woking, Surrey where he taught French and English. He was a superb teacher who offered an excellent example of first-class teaching. In 1976 he left teaching, giving a very honest appraisal of what was wrong with the school in his farewell speech. He became a taxi-driver, at the same time teaching Austrian Easter and summer school students in Guildford. One of the chaperones from the Viennese language school was Ilse Schindler who became a close friend of ours. She, like all the other Austrian lady teachers, cooked us Wiener Schnitzel, appropriately named after Vienna, and as successive Austrian ladies arrived twice yearly, so we sampled their cooking skills at Tony's house in Godalming, Surrey.

Tony spoke fluent French after spending seven or so years in Algeria as a travel agent and his decision to move to France to work for Berlitz in 1977 made perfect sense. That decision echoed my own intention in 1973 when I rented a flat on Rue Vieille du Temps near the Marais but my mother's life-threatening illness forced me back across La Manche and by the time she had recovered the moment had passed. No Berlitz. No Parisian home. No French wife.

When he married Jocelyne in 1978 they stayed with us in Guildford. It was a very happy time. Then Caroline was born to complete the family.

Sadly, divorce followed and Caroline lived with Jocelyne from the age of eight or so. Over the years, we kept in touch and whenever I was in





Richard and Tony at the Red Rose  
Indian Restaurant in Guildford on  
his final trip to the UK



Pere Lachaise Crematorium

Paris we met and sometimes I stayed in the Voltaire apartment.

One year my department sought to cure me of my fear of heights by taking me on a trip to Paris [Key therapeutic interventions: climb to top of Notre Dame; travel in a very shaky lift to the top of the Eiffel Tower; return flight. Thank you Barbara [Lockie] for holding my hand on the flight out!] and Tony invited us all to tea. Marilia was usually there and it was always good to resurrect fading French skills in conversation with help from Tony. She often accompanied Tony on his trips to the UK and it was always fun to see them.

On one occasion, Tony, Caroline and I went to a local restaurant in Paris where Tony recounted how he had just had a shock. The previous day, he had asked a stranger for the time in his usual impeccable French only to be answered in English! Caroline did not find it at all surprising, commenting on how English Tony looked and sounded. It was very touching to see how solicitous Caroline was as she helped Tony on with his jacket. He was devoted to her as well.

On his penultimate trip to Guildford Tony asked me if I would be his executor to which I agreed. It became clear on his final visit to Guildford with Caroline, David and *les enfants terribles* that he was struggling with some illness. It took two days to meet after mixed messages and when I finally tracked him down to the corridor of his hotel, The Travelodge, I saw heading towards me a frail stooping friend who had great difficulty opening the door of his room. It transpired that he had Parkinson's. There followed a communications gap as mail lay unseen in his apartment until I learned that he was very ill. He never received my letters expressing concern for his welfare. Then came the invitation to the funeral at Pere Lachaise.

## The Girl with the White Rose

There are no clichés in death.

Sunlight danced all around Pere Lachaise Cemetery, dappling light here and there, ever the divine impressionist. It decorated the looming sepulchres and monuments and the mourners trudging uphill. Ancient trees, dating back to Napoleon, swayed slightly, their leaves sieving and filtering the cynosure. However, the cliché of a perfect spring morning could be entertained and enjoyed. Life could be embraced.

But there are no clichés in death.

Earlier there had been anxiety in the then slightly chill Parisian air. The English couple dillied then dallied over the taxi option as they set out to walk up the boulevard to the cemetery. Sensibly they took a taxi as the Gambetta entrance to the Crematorium was over the other side of the 110acre site. The driver was of Arab extraction-taciturn and efficient. Ten minutes later they arrived at the entrance.

To the right was a small office staffed by a lady reading Figaro. She looked up and responded to a greeting from a cheery worker, quick to return to the latest news of immigrants drowning off the Libyan coast. Her cousin may have been on that boat. In the distance, up the cobbled roadway, monumental buildings beckoned: Columbarium flanked the Crematorium whose steep steps seemed to summon souls, dead and alive, to another place. But the huge doors were firmly shut.

He expected to see his dead friend leaning against one of the classical pillars with a puzzled grin. He frequently wore a slightly startled look when life posed one of its many inopportune questions. Over the decades he had honed that response into a comic turn-whereby his reaction stalled on a grin, his eyes widened and his mouth tightened.

The gracefully curved stone bench offered a strategic view of arrivals. The first arrival was a large, bright yellow digger which parked neatly facing the Crematorium. The driver shifted his cigarette to the other corner of his mouth as he paused for thought. He reversed and drove off. A backpacker loped past.

As 10 am approached, a lone female in a black puffer jacket greeted other new arrivals. Our eyes met at that moment of dawning recognition-a four-year gap-and we embraced. Our tears



mingled. Our words half sounded; our clasp wracked with grief. Marilia was distraught. The circle of mourners thickened; new faces gazed speculatively; quiet introductions in French and English; half-heard names.

Gaunt and graceful, my friend's daughter approached, stopping en-route to greet others-until we clasped and mingled tears: palpable grief and suffering wracked Caroline's body. We said nothing. Then her mother-a thirty five-year gap-hesitated to approach. The gap closed as the palimpsest of memory updated – just as features are re-constructed by forensic anthropologists. Voila! – Alexander the Great – Jesus – Richard III – the murder victim from Roman times: Richard-Jocelyne. Recognition.

We embraced. Tears flowed. Time had healed us. Tony in death had reunited us.

Berlitz colleagues congregated. The sense of being in fine company grew. There was no language barrier. There was no dress code. There was deep sadness. There was the girl with the white rose.

There were discoveries – Sean, Tony's childhood friend of sixty years, kicked my mere forty-year friendship into the long grass. We were laughing about some Tony foible when I noticed a woman watching us keenly. It was his daughter, Judith, Tony's goddaughter. How lucky he and Tony were to have such delightful daughters.



The mourners were led through the side of the building to an inner courtyard to be addressed by a dapper gentleman with a small beard. He shepherded us into an underground space with tiered seats and an aisle. The family went first, of course: Caroline, David, Marilia to the left of the aisle; Jocelyne to the right on her own at first then joined by Sean and Judith for support. Jocelyne's parents sat behind Caroline in the second row on the left. The girl with the white rose sat at the back.

The first sight of the coffin was a shock and above it on a screen flamed a photo of Tony in full bloom quizzically looking

into the lens of Marilia's camera on the terrace of his apartment. His habitually thin frame and riveting gaze compelled attention. Then other memorabilia to either side of the sunken space also demanded attention: photographs from school-days, marriage, Caroline, Jocelyne and family.

The simple brown wooden coffin headed by a neat brass plaque occupied much of the sunken space – an oratorical arena in which the obsequies were administered by the Crematorium official.

The lectern flanked by two microphone stands served his purpose. Beach boy songs, a Serge Reggiani chanson and Ana Mouri's fado version of Sabe Deus [God Knows] filled the underground auditorium then addresses in French by Caroline and then Jocelyne. Everyone was invited to say something but it would require preparation. Any utterance would have to be in fluent French. Any attempt to add an unprepared farewell would grate; it would counter the dignified flow of the carefully choreographed secular service. It was the prerogative of the family.

The invitation to scatter red rose petals along the lid of the coffin met with a unanimous response with most people sprinkling the petals then lightly touching the brass plaque and looking at one or other of the photographs either side. One of the last to pay their respects was the girl with the long stemmed white rose which she placed at the foot of the coffin lid. Then she left.

There are no clichés in death.

Sunlight danced all around Pere Lachaise Cemetery, dappling light here and there, ever the divine impressionist. It decorated the looming sepulchres and monuments and the mourners sauntering downhill.



Ancient trees, dating back to Napoleon, swayed slightly, their leaves sieving and filtering the cynosure. However, the cliché of a perfect spring afternoon could be entertained and enjoyed. Life could be embraced.

There are no clichés in death.

# Some Memories of Peter Goodall

by Matthew Alexander

Matthew Alexander was educated at Warwick School and Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He took a post-graduate Museums Studies course at the University of Leicester, specializing in local history. He was appointed Assistant Curator of Guildford Museum in 1975, and became Curator in 1980. He has published a number of books on the history of Guildford and Surrey social history. Matthew took early retirement in 2009, and was elected Honorary Remembrancer of Guildford – in effect the Borough's official local historian.

I first met Peter in the late 1980s. By that time, he had established a regular mid-day Saturday gathering at his gallery in Bull Head Gate, an alleyway leading off Market Street in Guildford. In fact, it could not have been a more central location: the famous Guildhall on the High Street was the neighbouring building. A steep flight of wooden stairs led up to a large first-floor hall, open to the rafters of the roof. A door in the right-hand corner led through to a smaller room beyond. When I had first visited the premises it had been the workshop of a musical instrument maker and restorer, but now it was the Peter Goodall Gallery. The walls were covered with hessian, and a great variety of prints and other illustrations were hung on them. Chests of drawers held more.

It was in the back room that we all gathered. Peter provided wine and other drinks, though many of us brought a bottle as a contribution. Peter himself was cheerful, generous and revelled in his role as host. He was (or had been) a member of the Chelsea Arts Club, and I felt that this atmosphere of free-ranging conversation, with a drink in one hand, was the milieu in which he really felt at home. While he had an extensive knowledge of prints, he managed to give the impression that actually dealing in them was something of a side-line.

He did genuinely did have a side-line, that of selling the work of the art potter Yap. He described an episode when he had wrapped one of these delicate pots in paper and carefully placed it in the foot-well of the passenger seat of his car, as a safer place than on the back seat or in the boot. Unfortunately, an unexpected and

unsuspecting passenger got in, breaking the valuable pot. Peter took a philosophical attitude to this calamity; he said he was able to admire the superlative control of the artist, in the regularity of the cross-section of the pot's wall.

Those who attended the Saturday meetings, mostly men included artists, writers, journalists, actors, and others who simply had led an interesting life and had a story to tell. The group had the unofficial name of The Oddballs and the *dramatis personae* changed from week to week. Some came only once, others became regulars.

One regular was Henry Metelmann, a former member of the Hitler Youth who had driven panzers on the Eastern Front and had barely escaped with his life from Stalingrad. Taken prisoner by the Americans, he came to England after the war. His wartime experiences, not surprisingly, had deeply affected his later life and were the major topic of his conversation. He had compensated for his former Nazism by becoming a communist and an admirer of Stalin. Another was Michael Charles, whose father had been an officer in the merchant navy. Michael was engaged in amassing a major collection of paintings of merchant steamships, which was to become the British Mercantile Marine Memorial Collection. Others included Russell Chamberlin, a distinguished historian and travel writer, Peter Newmark, a German Jew who had come to England as a boy in the 1930s, and became a gifted linguist and the founder of translation studies, and Phil Foster, a journalist and painter with a seemingly encyclopaedic knowledge of almost any subject that cropped up.

A feature of the back room was a curious pub game known locally as Toad in the Hole. A small table had a lead top, pierced with a few large holes and a cast-iron toad with its mouth open. The object was to toss lead discs into the open mouth of the toad or, failing that, into other holes which scored less. A series of chutes below the holes allowed the discs to be recovered. Few of us actually played the game, but it served as a talking point.

Every year on St George's Day Peter threw a full-scale party at the gallery. The main room was cleared, and the back room served as the bar. I remember one occasion when champagne cocktails were served. This involved dropping a sugar cube into the glass, then brandy was added and topped up with champagne. The cocktails were handed round on a tray and within a very short time indeed hilarity spread through the gathering. It was not long before the guest who had volunteered to mix the cocktails came to Peter to

ask for another bottle of brandy. Peter was surprised that the first hadn't lasted long, until he realised that the volunteer barman had mixed the cocktails with half brandy and half champagne! The guests often prepared party pieces. An actor and actress, husband and wife, performed short scenes from Shakespeare. Poems were recited, and songs sung. Some even came in costume or fancy dress; a faint echo, perhaps, of the Chelsea Arts Balls of the past.

These revels were not to last, however. By the mid-1990s Peter had left the gallery and moved to Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. Some of the regulars continued to meet on Saturdays at other venues in the town, but all lacked the atmosphere of the gallery. The group adopted the title of the Montgolfier Society; a reference to whole thing being supported by a lot of hot air. There are some of us who still meet, perhaps not so regularly as before, and fewer now as many have moved away or passed away. Nevertheless, we still voice a wide variety of opinions on a wide variety of subjects, drink in hand. In this we perpetuate to some extent the vision of Peter, a true bohemian.

Matthew Alexander

16 March 2015



**PETER, THE PRINT AND THE BULL HEAD GATE PAINTING**  
*John Tatchell Freeman*

45" high x 80" wide – signed by the artist, bottom left corner and dated 1990. Until recently owned by Mrs Dita Freeman of Cranleigh, Surrey and re-acquired by RGC in 2014. The subjects are, from left to right in the foreground, Richard Grenville Clark, Mole, Peter Goodall. The screen, very much part of the painting's origin, depicts the artist, John Tatchell Freeman and his wife, Jane Allison, the portrait painter. Clark and Goodall are both holding copies of John Kay's *Portraits and Caricatures* (see note 26). John is extremely knowledgeable about satirists like John Kay (1724–1826) and William Hogarth (1697–1764) hence the initial clash between him and Peter.



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## ALT LAYOUT.

*I think the previous orientation is better as it better reveals the painting at the larger size...*

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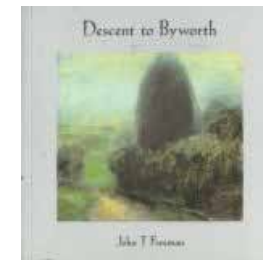
*Self-portrait: William Hogarth and his pug (1745)*



*John Tatchell Freeman*

## John Tatchell Freeman

John Tatchell Freeman was born in London in 1958 and studied at Bath Academy of Art (Corsham) 1976–77 and then at Chelsea School of Art 1977–80. Since leaving college, while continuing to paint, he has developed a particular interest in etching. Examples of his work can be seen in the critically acclaimed book *I London*, which met with praise from writers such as Roddy Doyle, William Boyd, Jah Wobble and Pauline Stainer; fellow-artist, Ralph Steadman; film-maker Ken Loach and the critics Jenny Uglow, Vanessa Beer and David Lee; actor-director Steven Berkoff, ‘The Who’ star Pete Townsend and Ken Livingstone, MP. The artist’s exploration of himself, his past, his city and the river place his work clearly in the tradition of the etched psychodramas of Goya, Piranesi, Ensor and Klinger.



His other books include *Descent to Byworth*, *Portrait Drawing* and the soon to be published *Parish Workings*. His etchings are in the collections of The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and The Glynn Vivian Museum in Swansea.

He is currently working on his next book of text and etchings *Between the Gate of the Sun and the Gate of the Moon: Reflections on Alexandria*.

He has taught since 1985 as a freelance tutor and lecturer to all levels of ability across a wide spectrum including the computer games industry, Lion Head and Media Molecule, Hurtwood House School, West Dene College, The Watts Gallery, Tate Britain, and the Prince of Wales Drawing School. He is a member of The Chelsea Arts Club.

John Tatchell Freeman was interviewed at his home in Guildford by RGC, August 2015.

RGC: Thanks very much, John, for agreeing to this interview. What can you remember of your first meeting with Peter?

JTF: It was at the Goodall Gallery in Market Street and I remember early one morning opening the door and hearing the tinkle of that bell, closing it, and then it tinkling again. It is that tinkle that I always associate with Goodall, you know? Then I remember standing at the bottom of the stairs, looking up and hearing the creaking of his footsteps – that creaking sound in his office. Anyway, I walked up and he wasn't around and I can still hear this shifting of feet. Then he came out with his hand in his pocket jingling his change, sort of shuffling, pocket billiards sort of stuff.

On seeing me, his immediate attitude was *what on earth are you doing in my shop*, you know, and I said I was just looking for some Hogarths. He grudgingly opened this drawer saying 'well I've got these'. I added 'Richard Newton?' He replied – 'Who?' I repeated 'Richard Newton' to which he retorted, 'Oh, you mean *Newton*'.

It depressed me. *Newton. I didn't know you knew who Newton was.*

Then he showed me Beer Lane – Beer Street – by Hogarth, saying it was of the period. I suggested it was a later version, which resulted in him frantically shuffling his hand in his pocket. I added 'cos he's holding up a leg of beef which appeared afterwards – it was amended'.

He disagreed: 'I really don't think so but you wait here while I go and check'.

I could hear all this frantic creaking of floorboards and then he came out, fiddling with his glasses: 'Well, I think you're right'. I asked how much he wanted – something exorbitant – and I could see he was making it up as he was going along. As I left, I thought I would not go back there.



*Peter Goodall in The Bull Head Gallery, 1994*

At about that time Ron Baskerville<sup>1</sup> and I had this little exhibition for which he asked me to do a poster. I did this cartoon of myself and he did one of himself and he shoved it through Goodall's door. I went back in for something for Jane who didn't want to go in because she had met him when he was at the other place – that little emporium just off North Street. She and her mum went in there and he was so rude to them that they just walked out.

As I went in, he said 'I think I know you, I've seen you', and then he pointed to the cartoon on his wall. That is how we met again. It was the cartoon that broke the ice and then he finally confessed, grudgingly, that he had made too many assumptions about me when he first met me and he said that he was pretty taken aback by the fact that I had caught him out. And – yeah – it's funny, isn't it? Which we know is exactly how he treated everyone. But I do remember one thing. I went to the door of his office the first time – I followed him – I didn't go in the office – the first thing I could smell – was French cigarette smoke, that was it – and I remember the radishes on his table lined up and Cinzano – was it Cinzano?

RGC: Martini Dry.

JFT: Martini Dry. That's what I remember, and that was about a quarter past ten.

RGC: What was he wearing?



JTF: He was wearing a tie and that jacket he used to wear –

RGC: Tweed?

JTF: It was a tweed jacket and, I think – did he have brown shoes?

Brown shoes – yeah – that was right. And he had that horrible little cap made of chewed African grass which was hanging up above his desk and I remember noticing that. I didn't realize he was actually going to wear it.

RGC: Did he talk about his background in prints?

JTF: Yes.

RGC: Was that Simms Reed?

JTF: I can't remember.

RGC: Yes, it is still in Duke Street, St James, SW1.

JTF: He said his godfather was one of the directors – they ran the racing Sangsters or something like that.

RGC: Ah, yes.

JTF: His godfather set him up. He got a job with these dealers.

Then he had a gallery in Kensington in a basement and he was working from there. I'm not sure why he left but I know at that period he was living between the Chelsea Arts Club and there and he left the Chelsea Arts Club. In fact, Freddie Dean said he was continually resigning after having a tantrum and then going back. When Roger McGough, the poet, became the chairman and they voted to allow women in, Goodall's world collapsed. He resigned and this time they said good, we'll accept it and he never got back. But prior to that he had given up drinking for three years and so for his last three years at the club he didn't drink but I'm not sure why. I think it must have been an incident – I can't remember what it was – but it started off as a sort of a wager. Anyway, he didn't drink. What he used to do, when he moved to Guildford finally to live with his mum, was to keep a taxi running outside the club and take it all the way to Guildford. I always remember thinking that that showed how affluent he was at the time. It was also at that time that he got to know Vincent Price.<sup>2</sup>

RGC: What did Price buy from him?

JFT: One day I happened to mention Vincent Price – it was in connection with what he said about Francis Bacon<sup>3</sup> – because he had that Bacon statue, didn't he? In the fireplace, you know, the Bacon portrait and he said 'ah I knew Vincent'. When he was in the basement in Kensington, he said this bloke came

down one day. It just shows you how out of touch with popular culture Goodall was – he said Price was American, he bought a few prints and they got on. He thought this bloke was sort of cultured and knew what he was talking about and he invited him for lunch at the club. But it was only when he was in the club that somebody actually said to him they didn't realise he knew Vincent Price. Up to that point he didn't know who he was. Vincent Price used to come over to London and rent a flat off Sloane Square, usually around Christmas to go and see all the pantomimes. He used to do it regularly every year, saying, according to Peter, that it was the best theatre, pure theatre, which could not be found anywhere else. When he was over he used to invite Goodall round for dinner and this, that and the other.

RGC: I just knew, apart from being a film star, he was a stamp collector, because when I left school which was a bit of a disaster, having been expelled, I worked for a philatelist, Robson Lowe, and Price was then – and this was in 1962, spending £30,000+ a year on stamps. So I wondered what he was buying from Peter.

JFT: Yeah – I mean Price was building up a collection – it was a gallery – a proper gallery: the Vincent Price Gallery. It seems that when he was at the club, when I used to listen to Peter talk about it, you could hear that sort of homoerotic...

RGC: Was that very strong do you think? With Peter? That homoerotic thing? Did it manifest itself at different times and in different ways? Was it a kind of patina? Price's daughter has said that she was certain that her father had physical relationships with men.

JFT: Obviously, the thing that struck me more than anything else is that time I saw him with that Bob Smith.<sup>4</sup> It was summer when I visited the gallery and the pair of them were stripped to the waist, drinking in the office. It reminded me of that 'Women in Love' scene.<sup>5</sup>

RGC: Oh yes, absolutely, the wrestling. It must have been very unsightly – Bob wasn't exactly ...

JFT: There was something funny going on there, you know what I mean. I tried to find out a bit more about Peter's early days. He went to Malvern<sup>6</sup> and absolutely hated it and every so often he used to drop a few hints about it. His dad had died – killed in the war...

RGC: Yes, he was a rear gunner – tragically lost over Germany.

JFT: That's right. So he had that to contend with that but I think he might have been, by the sounds of it, a victim of public school sexual abuse. I have a strong feeling that something traumatic happened. I actually do seriously think that it was the classic thing of 'stop it, I like it'.

RGC: That is an interesting point. Because there was a dark side – a dark side that you felt he was concealing. We are not talking about somebody who shared their...

JTF: He was venomous towards women. He absolutely loathed women.

RGC: But not physically, because he did...

JTF: No, exactly. But I always felt he was trying to prove something – he was trying to prove something – I think he was definitely doing that. He wasn't comfortable. When you think of the women he used to end up with, the link used to be drink.

RGC: Charterhouse in London was constantly in and out of his conversation.<sup>7</sup> One of his girlfriends, Hermione, a somewhat ethereal lady, worked there, didn't she? He knew a resident there that he visited regularly. I don't know why. Just one thing quickly, John, did he ever mention Laurie Lee? Because you told me, I think, that he fell out with Lee.<sup>8</sup>

JFT: Yes – he did. He knew him because of the Chelsea Arts Club when Laurie Lee almost seemed to be living in there.

RGC: He lived in Gloucester and needed somewhere to stay in London. When I met him at his house in Slad, I mentioned Peter but Laurie Lee just looked fixedly, refusing to comment.<sup>9</sup>

JFT: I think he had a place nearby and he had a big falling out with Lee. I am not sure what over but I got the impression that he just lived in that place. When you think about all the rows he was having, all these fallings out with people there, it was almost like one-sided lovers' tiffs.

RGC: That's an interesting point – he had invested emotional currency in his relationship with Lee. You are talking about men and women, aren't you?

JFT: Men – because there were no women at that point in the Club – and if there were, they had to go in the ladies' bar.

RGC: I was thinking more generally as well though.

JTF: I think so. Again, I think that he confused friendship with exploitation. The classic thing, you know, when he would go into

Thorp's, he would rush in...<sup>10</sup>

RGC: That's right. He used to do that to me as well.

JTF: He used to rush in before you.

RGC: Straight to the table.

JFT: To see if there was any book he could sell.

RGC: That was singularly unpleasant.

JFT: And then I remember going into Thorp's and seeing books behind the desk and asking about them and I was told that they were taken by Goodall and they were all the ones I would have wanted. I asked if Goodall had paid for them, and was told they were holding them back for him. One day I asked one of the blokes 'how much was that one?' And he said, 'ten quid', but 'I am afraid that Mr Goodall has booked it and claimed it'. And then Goodall offered it to me for something like £30 and I said 'you haven't even bought it yet... I could go and get it for a tenner, Peter'.

RGC: So, you too struck up a friendship with Peter? There was a lot of affability with Peter and bonhomie with the drink and the rituals.

JFT: He had set up a genuine bohemian salon which was actually ruined by all the wankers and lackeys.

RGC: It was a booze culture with a financial spin.

JFT: Spin. Definitely. He was always out. Basically, I could sum Peter up by saying he was an incredibly lazy spider. He just used to wait for things to fall into his web and I think he would always look to the nearest person; he could not separate commerce from friendship. I think that was a bit of a dilemma for him.

RGC: To me, and I don't know whether you would agree with this, but it was like he felt he was owed an extra margin on everything. Life had not given him everything he wanted. He was an angry man and drink fuelled that resentment. Outbursts of anger and so on were very common. I can't remember the number of times Peter came around to eat with us, had a tankful and blew up! The next morning there would be a profuse apology on the mat, a note, always in black ink.

JFT: His levels of expectation were really high.

RGC: A lot of people said, and I think this included Bob Smith, but there were other people whose opinions were probably more valuable, that Peter would have been a brilliant don had

he had the opportunity or inclination to study – I don't know, or something like that... but he was bright, wasn't he? If misguided and ignorant at times.

JFT: I think he wanted to be an institution: at the bottom line he was a snob.

RGC: Did you feel a class thing?

JFT: Oh yes.

RGC: I don't mean on the initial encounter...

JFT: Oh, no, no. I felt that immediately. I've felt that all my life.

RGC: That's because you have never bothered to cover up your background.

JFT: That's right.

RGC: Because you don't need to.

JFT: I tripped him up so many times and I think it was because of that there was this element of interest, almost fascination for me. He realized that snobbery didn't work and because it was always there, it made for an interesting sort of...

RGC: Peter definitely respected you regardless. Could you say something about the Henry VIII woodcut?

JFT: One day he was poring over this book that Traylen<sup>11</sup> had given to him...

RGC: Was that to sell on?

JFT: Yes, and he was obviously looking at it with an eye to what he could tear out. And he...

RGC: Sorry, John – was this in a book?

JFT: It was in a book, yes. Like a book of ...

RGC: Miscellaneous prints?

JFT: Yes, and I remember they were all laid in. Seeing this Henry the thingie, he said he was going to take it up to London to his mate.

RGC: Was it Menzies?<sup>12</sup>

JFT: Menzies. By coincidence I'd come in just a couple of weeks later just when he opened the post and he went mental because Menzies' Catalogue had come out with this Henry VIII print in it. Menzies had sold it for tens of thousands of pounds! He got onto the phone on the wall and I remember that he was absolutely livid, and he was giving Menzies an earful. Menzies, being like him, said, 'Well, it's business Peter, and I thought you didn't want it'.

RGC: So the nub of it was that Peter failed to recognize...

JFT: Failed to recognize this print...

RGC: It is a very rare print indeed, isn't it?

JFT: Especially this one – and, of course, Menzies being one of his close friends as far as dealers can be friends, rather than sort of say I've identified this so let's go halves on this, didn't tell him. I don't think he bought the print, I think he bought the book. I think he bought the whole lot.

RGC: Was that for £4,000 or something?

JFT: Something ridiculous, nothing compared to what Menzies sold it for.

RGC: There were other valuable things in it too.

JFT: So that was the end of that relationship.

RGC: Michael Parkin – did you ever meet him?<sup>13</sup>

JFT: I met him a couple of times

RGC: He was quite a supporter of Peter. He was pretty straightforward, wasn't he? I helped put up the Parkin-Goodall exhibition.

JFT: Well, as much as any of them – Parkin was selling those prints I printed up ... Birket Foster.<sup>14</sup> I was given all the plates and I printed them off and then I saw them being sold as the originals later.

RGC: That leads us neatly on to the Bull's Head Gate printing press. Can you tell us how that started and what was your arrangement with Peter concerning your occupancy of the downstairs room?

JFT: I had the printing press downstairs as I needed a place to stick it and the arrangement was that I could have the basement and he would sell the prints. I was producing the Ogmire Vale and Dylan Thomas stuff<sup>15</sup> down there and the idea was that it would be a nice little set up and, of course, I was doing the prints but he was too lazy to sell them, making no effort – and of course, in the end, things started to get tough. I think they wanted him to pay rent. He wasn't paying any rent. He wasn't expecting to have to pay.

RGC: I didn't know that. So, Peter owed rent? Who owned the building?

JFT: It was the same person who owned the Tudor Rose. Peter had it as a sort of gentleman's agreement for next to nothing and he

hadn't been paying the rent and that was one of the reasons he had to leave.

RGC: Oh, I see.

JFT: He was defaulting on that.

RGC: You didn't pay him rent?

JFT: No, because I told him I couldn't. Then he said 'well, you have been down there for a long time and I could rent that out'. In reality, it was always flooding with excrement, the toilets were flooding etc... I said that wasn't the agreement. 'Well, I don't know' he said.

I literally disappeared overnight which he wasn't expecting and ...

RGC: I always thought you were the token artist – no, I mean the artist in residence – and that gave him kudos and you somewhere for your printing press.

JFT: That was the idea – the idea was that he had an empty basement ... which gave him kudos.

RGC: Exactly. Was Freddie's stuff in there?<sup>16</sup>

JFT: Freddie's stuff was eventually in there.

RGC: Now Peter had a ritual for drinking, didn't he? He used to drink at least a bottle or two of Martini a day.

JFT: A bottle of Martini before eleven with his radishes and what else he had? He used to have a little bit of cheese.

RGC: Yes, and ham.

JFT: He had a little cheese knife which he used to cut the cheese and a little biscuit and he would always be looking at the clock. At eleven o'clock he would always say it was past the yard arm. That was when the wine would be uncorked.

RGC: And that was the Bulgarian red.<sup>17</sup>

JFT: The Bulgarian red which he always put on the heater to warm it up but it didn't just warm it up, it turned it into a kind of punch. That was the beginning and then he would stop drinking wine at lunch time and go on to brandy or scotch – one of those. Brandy – he would have Brandy. He would go on to Brandy in the afternoon and when he had shut up shop he would wander up to Pews,<sup>18</sup> I think it was, or whatever, have Brandies there and then walk up the hill to his mum's.

RGC: We are talking about a huge expenditure on booze. It was at least a bottle or two of Martini a day, at least two bottles of

Bulgarian wine plus all the other stuff.

JFT: Yes, well, he came around here once and brought a bottle of Brandy and drank it all, completely.

RGC: Crikey! Did people go to see you in your basement?

JFT: Very rarely. Very rarely. I used to go up and make an entrance. No, No.

RGC: We were talking earlier about Kenneth Baker – he was one of the famous people, Thatcherites, who visited him to buy cartoons. That's right, isn't it?<sup>19</sup>

JFT: Cartoons, yes.

RGC: There were other people?

JFT: No, not really. There were in London quite a few.

RGC: There was Michael Campbell, wasn't there?<sup>20</sup> He used to come in occasionally but I don't think there was anyone else that I know of.

JFT: Yes.

RGC: Parties? One was a big triple event, wasn't it? St. George's Day, Shakespeare's birthday and Turner's birthday, all on the same day.<sup>21</sup>

JFT: Yes, so he would have his 'do's' which originally started out as quiet affairs.

RGC: People gathering together.

JKFT: People gathering and he would drape, get all the Turner prints out, Shakespeare stuff and put the flag up, the St George's Flag. There used to be three or four people in there, it would be punctuated with toasting 'to the Bard' and everyone would have a drink.

RGC: What did you make of the people?

JFT: Well, originally, they were quite interesting.

RGC: Can you remember who they were?

JFT: Well, there was Michael Charles, the naval man, and Henry Metalman.<sup>22</sup>

RGC: Did he start coming early?

JFT: He started coming later.

RGC: He was a nice man.

JFT: He was. He obviously talked about the Eastern Front.

RGC: He was the gardener at Charterhouse.

JFT: Was he?

RGC: Yes, I met him originally at his house opposite the school.

I went over to see him to ask him to sign his book. It was interesting. He showed me a photo of his middle school class, saying he was one of the very few to have survived the war. He stayed on in Britain after the war as a gardener at Charterhouse.

JFT: I knew he worked on the railways.

RGC: Yes, he did that at first. When I saw him he was the gardener living near Charterhouse. Yes, you are right actually. You have a better memory than me! And people used to recite things like Eskimo Nell.<sup>23</sup>

JFT: The thing I remember is 'Who Am I?' And that would happen just like that – he'd say, "Who am I?" And that would immediately initiate 'are you such and such?' And you would try and work out who he was, asking questions...

RGC: And there were the Liberal Democrat councillors, Tamsin and her husband.

JFT: It was the Guildford Council lot – Gordon Bridger and his wife. They came in later. They basically got wind of it and there was that Bob bloke, who had that young wife – he was a property owner.

RGC: Oh, I remember.

JFT: He was a youngish sort of Jewish bloke who had an office in Quarry Street. He was a property developer. He was there to begin with. There was Michael Charles who was collecting ship portraits, correcting everyone on their English, and a couple of other people who came later and they turned it into this old bores' drinking den and ruined it. He hated them – he couldn't bear them there. He had them there because they used to bring drink. And he also managed to sell stuff, prints and that...

RGC: Do you remember his pricing policy?

JFT: Yeah.

RGC: Everyone, including us at first, suffered from that.

JFT: If he was caught unaware, it was £365, the number of days in the year. He used to say if he hesitated it suggested he didn't know what the price was and he would be quite mercenary about it, especially if he knew you really wanted something. I remember I got a Hogarth – this is classic. When I met him on my second visit – no, it was the first visit – I thought rather than leave, this

is important, rather than leave on my first visit without trying to leave the door open, I noticed he had this Hogarth self-portrait, the late one, this one – that one there. I said to him 'how much is that?'

JFT: I offered him about £20 which was a quite a lot because it was damaged.

RGC: They were nearly all water damaged, weren't they?

JFT: Foxed at the corner and I knew what he wanted, he wanted something reasonable for it – about £5 – and that was my reason for going back to buy the Hogarth. I went back and he said 'I can't, I've given it to a student who wanted to take away prints to clean them – a restoration student'. Of course, when I went back later, I opened the drawer and there was the Hogarth.

I asked to buy it -he had left the original price on the back – and, of course, he had forgotten to change it. He wanted more because it had been cleaned but he grudgingly honoured his agreement.

RGC: Now, if I could move on to the painting depicting me, Peter, Mole, yourself and Jane. Can you tell us how that came about?

JFT: It was that screen, wasn't it?<sup>24</sup>

RGC: Yes.

JFT: I went around the gallery and he had this screen standing there, and he was claiming he had only had it for a week.

RGC: I was with him when he bought it in Covent Garden.

JFT: That screen?

RGC: He bought it from that big dealers in Covent Garden – I was there and he paid £750 for it.

JFT: Because I thought there was a link with that Bone character...

RGC: No, none at all, as far as I know. Charles Bone you mean?<sup>25</sup>

I am referring to the dealer – he gave Peter a dealer discount on it. I thought it was a fantastic screen. We went up to this event at the gallery, on the corner. Massive stock.

JFT: It's not there now – on the corner of Vernon Street.

RGC: It was very well organized as well.

JFT: You see, something went wrong financially for Peter.

RGC: He became very short of dosh.

JFT: He tried to sell it to me when I went in.

RGC: I think he wanted £2,000 for it.



JFT: He said he wanted £2,000 for it and I said 'no way, I don't have the money to buy this, Peter'. He obviously thought Jane's dad would want to buy it for her. I said I'll just have a look at it. I was fascinated and then forgot all about it. Then it disappeared. I think he gave it to that Bone character to sell and then something went wrong. He became suddenly very desperate to sell it and there was some connection somewhere where someone had upset someone. He really wanted to get rid of it.

RGC: Offload it.

JFT: So, I had this exhibition coming up and I thought I would do a painting of him and because the canvas I had was long I thought I would do you and I put the screen in the background and...

RGC: You and Jane. (see Jane Allison)

JFT: And the dog. The idea was that it was supposed to mimic the John Kay print.<sup>26</sup>

RGC: You have reproduced it loosely on the wall of the painting and it pays homage to Hogarth and his pug.

JFT: Yes – and I did it really thinking – well, look, this is worth a try as much as anything else. Because he is so predictable. I entered it into this exhibition and put a price on double the amount of the

screen. It was a ridiculous amount – about £5,000 or something – and he came up and he said, 'I'll tell you what' he said 'I'll swap you the screen for the painting.'

RGC: So you succeeded in your devious plan!

JFT: And it surprised me, that's what I'm saying. He needed to get rid of it and as you say he needed the money. I think it was also that the original dealer he bought it from gave him a discount. He then gave it to the Bone character and somehow the original dealer got to hear how much he was asking for it. I suspect that he got back to Peter and said 'your name's mud!' It was the go-between that was trying to rip Peter off and the fact is he was off his head anyway. Eventually the price had fluctuated so extremely he couldn't sell it anyway because it was suddenly ...

RGC: So you painted it deliberately to ensnare Peter. What are you showing in the painting? You have the punter, me, on the left-hand side, we've got Mole ...

JFT: What it was – the idea was that he had that long table... the idea was from a formal point of view I had that long canvas and I thought how could I create a conversation piece at the same time as being particular to the gallery and how it worked was this – I thought I'd have you both sitting at either end of the table.

RGC: Peter's got a tenner in his hand.

JFT: Yeah – I don't know why that is...

RGC: I thought that was rather Hogarthian actually...

JFT: And you are the patron sitting at the other end.

RGC: Looking very upright, much more than normal.

JFT: I think at the back of my mind, it was almost like, there was an element of sort of knowing 'I know what you are up to Peter – you are trying to rip me off here.' It was that sort of thing and the dog is looking...

RGC: At me with his bum pointing at Peter.

JFT: Because the first etching I did was of Mole specifically for his gallery.

RGC: So that was the connection.

JFT: There is a connection there and that was the very first real etching I'd done and I had her on the table.

RGC: And it was tinted with colour, wasn't it?

JFT: And then the screen went in the background and, of course,



there is me in it and the reference to the '*I London*' plates' I'd started.

RGC: And Jack Ketch, and what about the scorpions?

JFT: Well, that's me surrounded by parasites. It was a gesture towards Peter you see.

RGC: And you have Jane as well.

JFT: Why did I put her in it?

RGC: She is to your right.

JFT: She is holding up something – a head or something.

RGC: That's right – she is typical of your female head portraits, isn't she, but there is more to Jane than that there, isn't there? I think... Salome?

JFT: I was trying to visualize. The idea was that I was hoping he would acquire it and have it in the gallery and therefore... I wouldn't have even thought about the exchange if I hadn't known he had to get rid of it. So that was the mystery. I knew that it was open to negotiation.

RGC: Brilliant – I'd still like to know what Jane represents...! Now can we move swiftly on to Ventnor where he moved. I drove him and Freddie Dean to North Wales with Freddie's stuff and then Peter hightailed it down to Ventnor having sold his mum's flat – his mum having died, correct? That is how I acquired the painting. He gave it to me because it was too big to transport to the I.O.W. He bought a shop in Pier Street in Ventnor and we used to go down there for drinks, didn't we? Several drinks if I remember – what to you recall of that?

JFT: Well, I'd gone down there with you first of all and then he used to go down to that pub on the seafront.

RGC: With all the seafarers – the authentic working class people.

JFT: That was his thing, and he would go down there... did he own that shop?

RGC: Yes, he did – to begin with – and then he sold his right to the property to somebody but he retained his right to lifetime occupancy.

JFT: He was doing the usual thing of selling off all the furniture. The second time I'd gone down after he'd ended up in hospital because...

RGC: He fell over the cliff when he was pissed on his way home from the pub and Nigel Traylen, on that occasion, was very good

because he paid for Peter to be in a nursing home.<sup>28</sup>

JFT: And then he recovered slightly and the last time I saw him was when he'd been for treatment for cancer of the throat and I had gone down and this was the bit I remember. He had been banned by the pub and he wasn't talking to Traylen, having fallen out with him.

RGC: Why had he fallen out with Nigel?

JFT: Over some sort of deal – Traylen had been ripped off or whatever and he wouldn't have anything to do with Peter. They lived opposite each other in Pier Street. Everyone's goodwill had dried up and I remember he had fallen out with the pub because he was rude to the landlord and his wife or something like that. I went to see him and he was upstairs. I had gone down to get him some booze – some vodka, I think it was vodka. Freddie's stuff and all the other stuff was lying all around and he was telling me about how he was going to make sure that Freddie was going to get all his gear back. He said that he wanted me and you to have this, that and this, and all sorts of things.

RGC: And there was a will. He gave us a handwritten will.

JFT: And he was quite anxious that his sister didn't get her hands on anything. That ruthlessness was still there.

RGC: And do you know what her name was?

JFT: I can't remember. And I suggested that he put it in writing about my paintings and all sorts of things. He replied he would do that. I said 'look, I am here now, would you like to write just a short note, just about Freddie's stuff?' I clearly remember asking that and he became all uppity and I thought I wouldn't go down there again.

RGC: I did give you the handwritten will he made in our favour when you went down.

JFT: Yes, that was the thing he'd written, leaving stuff to us: that's what I took down – and I took that along to the probate people. They said it was worthless. They also said because he was in debt.

RGC: The estate wasn't valuable enough even for probate.

JFT: He had all this rubble on the floor and I remember cleaning his kitchen because it was in such a state. I spent most of the day cleaning his house and then I remember I was sweeping this rubble off the floor, making it all tidy, and then suddenly it was 3 o'clock and Peter said, 'Oh, it's my lunch', or tea or something:

'you can go now'. I always remember his abrupt manner. You know what he was like – and I thought, well thank you, I have come all this way and he wasn't that ill – he was in his chair or zimmer frame. And that was the last time I saw him.

RGC: Ah – well, what I learned was that he was commuting from Ventnor to Southampton for treatment which is pretty rigorous when you have got cancer. Then he died. What happened then was a disaster, wasn't it?

JFT: What happened was that his sister – immediately – went to the local auctioneers and they sent in someone ...

RGC: She had moved to Ventnor, hadn't she?

JFT: She was in the area. To cut a long story short, I had rung up the auction house once the damage had been done and said 'look, you, with undue haste have moved in and in effect stolen the stuff.' There wasn't even a chance to find a will.

RGC: And the auction had taken place even before you had got there, hadn't it?

JFT: I said there wasn't even enough time for probate or anything and I can remember them getting all huffy and I said this is something for the police to look at. I left it at that and I phoned her – I'd got her number – and spoke to her husband and said they had stolen someone's property.

RGC: What did they say?

JFT: 'Well, yes, I think we did it all correctly' but I said 'I am on this now' and I said 'you have got stuff of mine and you have got stuff of Freddie Dean's and you have sold it.' I said he hadn't been dead for more than a couple of weeks. I didn't talk to them afterwards and, of course, then Freddie was frantic.

RGC: He had some very nice paintings...circus showman paintings based on Belle Vue Circus, Manchester.

JFT: It all sold in job lots for nothing.

RGC: Do you know what the auctioneers was called?

JFT: They are the auctioneers of Ventnor and they did really shoddy work. She had moved in and just sold the lot – greedy little horror! Then I went to see if there was any probate because I thought I would have had some legal handle to get it back.

RGC: I should have gone down with you – I rather left it to you, didn't I? Sorry – I must apologize.

JFT: And then there was that thing he had left to one of the Oxford colleges (head of Francis Bacon? Robert Graves?). And so that was it – his sister...

RGC: I went with him to Oxford to take that bust. Sale or return! Classic Peter.

JFT: He wanted me – he had written a letter to them saying that I was to pick it up.

RGC: He used to go to Oxford a lot in those days.

JFT: So that was what happened – so God knows where it all went.

RGC: So he is buried in Ventnor presumably?

JFT: I don't know.

RGC: I wrote to Nigel Traylen asking him for details and I heard nothing – does that surprise you? He wouldn't give me any information. He never bothered to reply. That sums it up really, doesn't it? The fact that his sister acted presumptively like that reveals this huge communications gap between interested parties; she presumably did not even know that he had left anything in a rudimentary will to us and that there were items which should have reverted back to their owners – it's a rather acidic final word, isn't it?

JFT: I think I could say he died friendless and penniless. I do believe that his life was one long suicide note. He gave up on everything – he took the path of least resistance and even the gallery in Guildford, half the time he hadn't been paying rent: he neglected the basics.

RGC: But he was taking in a lot of money – £55-£60,000 a year because he showed me the books. There were two sets of books: the fake one showing minimal takings, and the real one showing fifteen times the amount.

JFT: Yes, he was concerned about the tax people.

RGC: He was actually taking in £4,000 a year for the tax people on average but in fact taking in £55,000+. For a time while the inflated prices worked, but then of course, Jane, you and myself, all discovered that they were massively too high.

JFT: He was just taking what he could grasp.

RGC: Short term.

JFT: What I did learn from him though was a lot about the dealing world. And, of course, there was the fiasco of the forgeries.

RGC: Could you finish on that note?

JFT: One day I walked in and he'd acquired this Rowlandson<sup>29</sup> and he was looking at it – there are two stories here – and he said I could cut this in two, right? And he said, 'It's a Rowlandson'. I had a look and I thought – wait a minute there's bits of this that don't work. And I said 'I'm sorry Peter, have you bought this?' and he said, 'well yes'. I showed him two prints where the forger had taken one lot of characters from one side and of course one of the ways you can tell a forgery – and it wasn't a print, it was a water colour, you can tell it was done with the benefit of hindsight, there is no exploration in the composition's intent. He looked at it and he said 'fuck' then he got on the phone to this dealer. He had this crumpled piece of paper in his hand and he said 'I've got Christie's receipt here saying that this is a Rowlandson which shows provenance'. This dealer said to him 'No, all you have got in your hand is a voucher saying that Christies were looking at it and that was what I gave you.'

RGC: It was worded in such a way to suggest it was a Rowlandson.

JFT: It was a receipt for when you come back in to pick it up. Peter in his greed had not noticed this so he had bought this forgery on the strength of a receipt; anyway, I had gone in prior to that and he'd bought this picture of Leach the potter.

He said 'I'm going to sell this' ...I said Peter 'I've seen this somewhere before' and I reached up to his shelf yet again and I took down this Toulouse Lautrec book.<sup>30</sup> It was a very rarely seen print of a printmaker and what this bloke had done, this forger, which I think was quite clever, is that he had noticed that this print looked very much like Bernard Leach<sup>31</sup> and had done just the head of it and copied the head and sold it as Bernard Leach which is more ingenious. Peter had fallen for that one and then a local bus driver from Guildford went in to the gallery with the contents of his grandmother's attic. She had lived in Paris and such and such and he brought in a Sickert<sup>32</sup> and what else did he have – I remember the Sickert and one or two other things, and Peter showed me the Sickert with the rusty nails. I looked at it and I said I very much doubted it was genuine. There was something else and anyway he promptly sold them to another local dealer who was up the alleyway – up towards the Castle – can't remember his name. Anyway he had sold them on the same day to some other dealer so they had gone straightaway. Peter didn't want to know anything about the fact that they were both

forgeries and...

RGC: And so who told him they were?

JFT: Well, I told him they had to be and he got such cold feet about it he quickly sold them all. Then I took him through the story of the forger. I said what he had done was to play directly to his greed –to his snobbery: the bus driver didn't know what he'd got – why didn't he go to Christies? Everyone goes to Christies.

RGC: Or even Bonhams in Guildford.

JFT: Why did he end up in your little place? Find your little place?

You don't advertise. I said there's all these things and I said he wanted cash for it, and I said of course it turns out some years later that it was one of many forgeries like it. So, Peter fell for it – fascinating.

RGC: If Peter was here now, what would you say to him?

JFT: 'How much is that? How much do you want for that, Peter?

F off, Peter! I'm not paying that.'



*Ron Baskerville: Self-portrait*

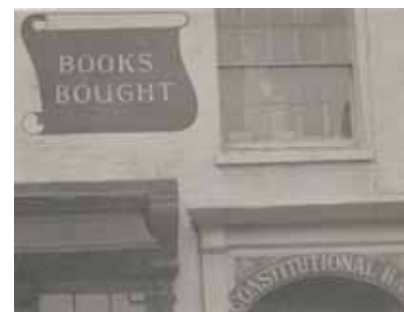
## ENDNOTES

1. Ron Baskerville (1926 – 1996) was born in the north of England. He became a student at the Manchester School of Art, and he was early on compared to Lowry. In the second world war he was in the English Merchant Navy and for a time he was stationed in the Pacific. By the 1980s he was living in Guildford in a splendidly situated council flat, close to the Norman castle, and nearly opposite the former home of Lewis Carroll. Ron usually worked in pastels. He sometimes painted sets for theatrical productions in Guildford, especially for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.  
In about 1984, Ron co-founded Artventure with Mike Prinsep, whereby art was used as therapy. He was very generous. If you liked one of his art works, he would give it to you, refusing all offers of money though wine was accepted.  
He was a member of the Guildford Metaphysical Society, some of whom attended his humanist funeral, along with old friends. Ron Baskerville was the artist with no phone, fridge, tv, radio, car or central heating. He was allergic to bad news hence his aversion to radio and television. His ashes were scattered under a small tree in a park in the castle grounds in 1996.
2. Vincent Leonard Price Jr. (27 May 1911 – 25 October 1993) was an American actor, known for his performances in horror films but he also appeared in many different genres on stage, radio and in films. Price was an art collector and art consultant, with a degree in art history from Yale University, lecturing and writing books on the subject. He had a particular interest in prints.
3. John met Francis Bacon, the artist, (1909–1992) in 1979 at The White Horse pub, Soho, when he was at Chelsea and road sweeping on the side:  
*Bacon thought I was a bit of rough. I didn't let on I knew who he was. We drank for three hours before I had to go and clear up Berwick Street Market. He wanted to come and watch. I remember he said 'What is success?' Then showed me a wodge of cash and repeated 'that's success'.*
4. Bob Smith was a Guildford character, son of a newsagent in Quarry Street, Guildford, who had adopted an upper-class persona within which was wrapped an alleged career as a journalist and film writer. When he was 'entertaining local pub goers' he was actually serving them in the pub and so on. Peter became ensnared in a convoluted house sharing arrangement with Bob and his equally pretentious wife from which he just managed to wriggle free with the inevitable falling out and financial loss.
5. *Women in Love*, the 1969 film directed by Ken Russell with Alan Bates as Rupert Birkin and Oliver Reed as Gerald Crich who experience a Laurentian moment wrestling each other naked.
6. Malvern College, an English public school, established in 1865 whose motto is *Sapiens qui prospicit: Wise is the person who looks ahead.*
7. The Charterhouse is a former Carthusian monastery in London, to the north of what is now Charterhouse Square. Since the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century the house has served as a private mansion, a boys' school and an almshouse, which it remains to this day.
8. When RGC went to borrow etching plates for the Frederick Carter A.R.E. book from the antiquarian bookseller, Ian Hodgson, in 1996 it transpired that Ian and his partner were friends of the Lees so on the way home he popped in to the Lees' house at Slad. Laurie Lee (1914–1997) came to the door and talked

about his new reading aid, a huge magnifying glass to help overcome his poor eyesight.

9. Thomas Thorp (established in 1883), 170 High Street, Guildford, closed on January 25th, 2003, and this followed the closure of Traylen's antiquarian booksellers in Quarry Street, Guildford, the previous week. That meant that there was no second-hand bookshop in Guildford. The Thorp premises became a Grade 11 listed building in 1983. What the following technical description does not show is what a key community role the book shop served; somewhere John and I and other friends could meet and wait while browsing the huge stock. The building is owned by Guildford Borough Council which did nothing to support the bookshop as a community resource. In a late interview John Thorp, in partly explaining his business's demise, declared that GBC had to charge Thorp's the same business rates as everyone else which was technically true but our high streets are doomed if this attitude persists. Bookshops need to be subsidised but *not* like charity shops which have all sorts of concessions and which have spread like a rash to replace conventional shops. There is no political vision at national or local level as we face Brexit: the ultimate evidence for a directionless, politically and historically illiterate, United Kingdom.  
'Book shop, former Constitutional Hall. Early C19 with C20 extensions to rear. Colour-washed brick with stone-coped parapet obscuring plain-tiled roof. Three storeys, with stacks to rear. Regular front, two 15-pane sash windows on second floor, two 20-pane sashes on the first floor below, both under gauged brick heads now painted over. Tripartite glazing-bar sash shop front window to ground floor left, with fluted end pilasters and flanking scroll brackets to blind box above. Arched entrance to right with chamfered piers, flanking pilasters supporting entablature above. Carved roses in spandrels of arch and with 'Constitutional Hall' written on arch face. Greek-key patterned paving on floor of entrance hall to inner double, panelled, doors under fixed overlight. Interior: C19th square banister staircase. C20th extensions to rear not of special interest.'

The premises, as Constitutional Hall, was the venue for the first cinema in Guildford in 1909. It also served as a bowling alley and meeting place.



10. Charles Traylen (1906–2002), sold books from 49-50 Quarry Street, Guildford, GU1 3UA, which also became a listed Grade 11 building in 1988.  
'House, now part of a shop. C17 with C18 front and altered in C20. Timber framed to rear, re-fronted in red brick with tile hung gable end to plain tiled

roof. Three storeys over cellar with plinth to ground floor, plat bands over ground and first floors, brick-dentilled eaves and stack to rear. One second floor sash window in architrave surround. One 4-light, mullioned and transomed casement window below on the first floor. Large plate glass shop window on the ground floor with blocked basement window below. Three-quarter glazed door to right under over-light.'

He boasted to Peter Goodall in 1994 that he had £250,000 in stock in the safe but only declared £4,000 total stock to the Inland Revenue. At a party, Traylen's intoxicated lawyer confessed to RGC that Traylen had escaped two drunk driving cases through his friendships with people who could interfere with the course of justice. He was an unsavoury character.

His bookshop manager, David Dawson, was RGC's tenant in the 1990s and when Traylen was away, DD threw a bizarre party at the Quarry Street premises – graced by the one-eyed shrimp seller frequently seen on his bicycle rounds of local pubs and other motley elements of Guildford's under-class – worthy of film-director Luis Bunuel (1900–1983), especially his *Viridiana* (1961), in which life is seen as a beggars' banquet. The party goers were drawn, of course, from Dawson's drink culture not Traylen's customers!

12. Chris Menzies was the London art dealer friend.
13. Michael Parkin (1931–2014), another London art dealer, was also a friend of Peter Goodall. RGC helped hang the *London River 1810–1910* Parkin-Goodall exhibition at the Peter Goodall Gallery with Michael Parkin and Peter Goodall. One of Parkin's famous exhibitions at his Belgravia gallery was *Fitzrovia and the Road to York Minster* (1973) – its catalogue contained an interesting memoir of Fitzrovia and Soho in the 1950s by the poet Ruthven Todd.



Peter had two plastic carrier bags full of his correspondence with Ruthven Todd which RGC constantly advised him to donate to the British Library. It was all probably thrown away by Peter's sister as rubbish when she disposed of his effects.

14. Myles Birket (Birkett) Foster (1825–1899) was a celebrated English illustrator, water-colourist and engraver in the Victorian period.
15. John produced a sequence of 8 copper etchings to complement 'And Death Shall Have No Dominion' by Dylan Thomas: seven aspects of Ogmores Vale, south Wales, and The Boat House, Laugharne, in honour of his mother (25 x 14cm).

## THE EIGHT WELSH ETCHINGS BY JOHN TATCHELL FREEMAN



*The Boat House, Laugharne*







*Frederick Deane, Self-Portrait,  
c.1948–1949,  
in connection with the  
Belle Vue Circus in Manchester.*



*Portrait of Joanna  
c.1950  
by Frederick Deane*



*RGC and Freddie Dean at Plas Penrhyn,  
Peurhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire,  
North Wales.*

16. Frederick Deane RP (1924–) was educated at The Manchester College of Art (1940–43) and The Royal Academy Schools (1946–51). He served for two years during World War II in the 10th Battalion 1st Airborne Division, The Parachute Regiment, and was wounded in his right eye after which he wore a distinctive eye patch. He was awarded the Leverhulme Scholarship in 1951 and from 1973–74 acted as President of The Chelsea Arts Club. Deane painted several Aero girls in a 1951 commission from the J. Walter Thompson advertising company: 'They paid top models to sit for me in the Royal Academy schools. I didn't have a studio, I was still a student!' He was a very successful portrait painter.

#### PLAS PENRYHN

Located towards the western boundary of the community on a commanding, elevated site overlooking Porthmadog and the Traeth Mawr; accessed via a lane running SW from the main road (A 487).

#### HISTORY

Plas Penrhyn began as a late C17/early C18th storeyed vernacular house. In 1827 Samuel Holland (1803–92), industrialist and owner/manager of the Gloddfa Ganol slate works at Blaenau Ffestiniog, moved to the house to which he added the Regency (NW) wing; the latter is recorded as having been roofed by September 1830. Holland's niece Elizabeth Gaskell completed her honeymoon here in 1832, as well as making subsequent visits during her uncle's lifetime. Plas Penrhyn was the home, from 1955 until his death in 1970, of Bertrand, third Earl Russell (1872–1970), philosopher, mathematician and social reformer.

#### INTERIOR

The Regency block has an entrance hall with late Victorian geometric tiled floor in buff, brown, red, white and black tiles. A depressed arch divides the entrance hall from the stair well to the rear; this with modern stick-baluster stair, which replaces a lift installed c.1960. It is possible that the original main stair occupied this position. Drawing and Dining rooms off to the R, the latter to the rear. Both have 6-panel doors with panelled reveals and convex panelled Regency architraves with applied foliated corner bosses; panelled window reveals and shutters and moulded marginal ceiling plaster. Original wooden Regency chimneypiece to the Dining Room, with surround similar to the architraves, though with additional cable moulding; simple wooden fireplace with engaged colonnettes to the Drawing Room.

The primary range has a stick-baluster stair with mahogany swept rail having columnar balusters; returned first floor balustraded landing. In the former hall (kitchen) is a large fireplace of inglenook type with segmental bresummer and early C19th bracketed mantelshelf; boarded door with contemporary boarded cupboards above. Above the door is an early hanging larder with turned sides and door; an inner plank porch with boarded door gives access to a cellar via a flight of old slate steps. Beamed ceiling with plain lateral ceiling beam and joists.

#### EXTERIOR

Villa-scale Regency country house with sub-medieval origins; 2 storeys. Of stuccoed rubble with double-pile plan, the E wing being primary; slate roofs with end chimneys. The main (W) elevation has 16-pane sashes, three to the



first floor and two to the ground floor. Fine full-length Regency verandah returned onto the sides, with hipped slate roof and flat, pierced wrought iron supports (Porthmadog foundry); slate-flagged terrace. The entrance is to the N return, via a part-gazed door with good Georgian fan above; this within the returned verandah. 12-pane sash to the R of the entrance with 16-pane sash to the first floor above, and a blind window to its R. The S return elevation is asymmetrical and has 12 – and 16-pane sashes on both floors. The primary range has a near-central entrance to the 3-bay E elevation, with boarded door within simple single-storey porch; 16-pane sashes. Further entrance to the far R with 12-pane sash above and flush lean-to beyond.

#### REASON FOR LISTING

Listed as a Regency villa-scale house with earlier, C17th origins, retaining good original character; of additional interest for its associations with Elizabeth Gaskell and as the last home of Bertrand, third Earl Russell.

NOTES: Located towards the western boundary of the community on a commanding, elevated site overlooking Porthmadog and the Traeth Mawr; accessed via a lane running SW from the main road. RGC drove Freddie and Peter to Plas Penrhyn in the 1990s in a hired white van crammed full of Freddie's paintings and belongings which had been stored in a downstairs room at Market Street. The trip was notable because we ran out of petrol on the M4. In view of what happened to Freddie's paintings in Ventnor when Peter died, it was just as well we made the trip.

17. For those who want to know the 'price of everything', a large bottle of Bulgarian red cost £2.90 and a bottle of Martini Dry cost £3.99 in 1994 (source: receipt from Bottoms Up, Greenwich). Peter and RGC always took plenty of drink when they visited Trevor Coldrey, the former bookseller from Guildford, at his pottery shop in Greenwich – always on a Sunday by train.
18. Pews Wine Bar, Chapel Street, Guildford, Surrey.
19. Kenneth Wilfred Baker, Baron Baker of Dorking (1934–), a former Conservative MP and cabinet minister (Home Secretary, Education secretary and Conservative Party Chairman) frequently visited Peter's Gallery in search of cartoons. He wrote: *George IV: A Life in Caricature* (2005, Thames & Hudson).
20. Michael Campbell of Campbell Fine Prints visited the Gallery and took a keen interest in the work of Frederick Carter whose work Peter had acquired, with RGC's financial help, from Jill Truefitt at Puttenham.
- 21.

PETER GOODALL PRINTSELLER  
BULL HEAD GATE, 12b MARKET STREET, TELEPHONE:  
GUILDFORD, SURREY GU1 4LB (0483) 36650  
Peter Goodall invites you to celebrate  
ST GEORGE'S DAY & TURNER'S & SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY  
ON  
23rd APRIL 1992  
AT  
7 O'CLOCK  
AT THE GALLERY  
DRESS INFORMAL, BUT A RED ROSE PLEASE. R.S.V.P.  
FOOD, WINE & ENTERTAINMENT

22. Henry Friedrich Carl Metelmann (1922–2011) was a German soldier, communist and writer who was best known for a book about his experiences growing up in Nazi Germany and World War II entitled *Through Hell for Hitler*. RGC visited him when he was working as a groundsman at Charterhouse School, Godalming, having settled in England in 1948. On that visit, holding a photograph of his secondary school classmates in Germany, he explained with tears in his eyes that most of them had not survived the war. The highly civilised Henry frequently attended drinking sessions at the Gallery and was held in very high esteem by everyone.

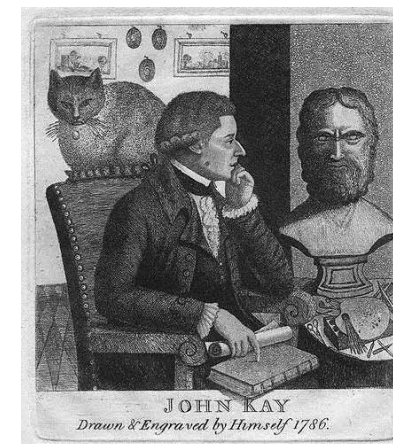
23. *Eskimo Nell* was sometimes recited from memory in Latin at the Gallery by a former Oxford scholar. The ballad starts:

'When a man grows *old* and his balls grow cold and the  
end of his knob turns blue.

When it's bent in the middle like a one-string fiddle,  
he can tell a yarn or two.

It does of course progress in its inimically obscene way.

24. The somewhat fragile screen is now sited at John Freeman's home in Guildford in the library. Both sides are covered in original 18th century satires and cartoons by Rowlandson and other artists of the period.
25. Charles Bone (1926– ), water-colourist, born in Farnham, Surrey, lived in Puttenham, near Jill Truefitt, in the main street.
26. John Kay (1742–1826) was a caricaturist and artist who was born near Dalkeith, where his father was a mason. At thirteen he was apprenticed to a barber, whom he served for six years. He then went to Edinburgh, where in 1771 he obtained the freedom of the city by joining the corporation of barber-surgeons. In 1784 he published his first caricature, of Laird Robertson. In 1785, induced by the favour which greeted certain attempts of his to etch in aquafortis, he took down his barber's pole and opened a small print shop in Parliament Close. There he continued to flourish, painting miniatures, and publishing at short intervals his sketches and caricatures of local celebrities and oddities, who abounded at that period in Edinburgh society.



Kay's portraits were collected by Hugh Paton and published under the title *A series of original portraits and caricature etchings by the late John Kay, with biographical sketches and illustrative anecdotes* (Edinburgh, 2 vols. 4to, 1838; 8vo ed., 4 vols., 1842; new 4to ed., with additional plates, 2 vols., 1877), forming a unique record of the social life and popular habits of Edinburgh at its most interesting epoch. Kay's famous shop on the Royal Mile was destroyed during the Great Edinburgh Fire of November 1824.

Coincidentally, RGC lived in Dalkeith at Newbattle Abbey, (1968–9). RGC and PG made a trip to Edinburgh to research John Kay in 1986 but RGC was diverted in a hunt for his first wife's history when they went via Wooler. That story is told in *Emma*.

27. Jack Ketch (died 1686) was an infamous executioner who caused immense pain to his victims, either sadistically or through incompetence. He was so unpopular he was forced to write a pamphlet *Apologie* to defend himself. Somewhat pathetically he blamed his victims for not lying correctly on the block. His name became a synonym for death, Satan, and executioner.
28. Nigel Traylen, son of Charles Traylen with whom he had a very difficult relationship, helped Peter at times but they eventually and predictably fell out. He and Peter both lived in Ventnor in Pier Street. Traylen had a bookshop there.
29. Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), English artist and caricaturist of the Georgian period.
30. Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa (1864–1901) was a French painter, printmaker, draughtsman, caricaturist, and illustrator.
31. Bernard Howell Leach (1887–1979), was a British studio potter and art teacher. He is regarded as the 'Father of British studio pottery'.
32. Walter Richard Sickert (1860–1942) was associated with the Camden Town Group, and he is now regarded as one of the most influential twentieth century British artists.



*John Tatchell Freeman and his son William*

## Jane Allison – Portrait Painter



Jane Allison has lived in Guildford for most of her life working primarily as a portrait painter whilst expressing her deep feelings about the Surrey countryside in a long series of landscapes which in their particularity could also be considered a form of portraiture. (in the tradition of many past English portrait painters)

She trained at Chelsea School of Art and at the Slade school of Fine Art and has worked as a professional portrait painter ever since. She has painted a wide variety of people from all walks of life, and has completed many official commissions, where the real challenge has been to balance the intrinsic character of the individual with the demands of the position represented. One of her recent portraits is of the Duchess of Cornwall in her capacity as Honorary Colonel of the 4th Wiltshire Rifles. Other notable sitters include Dr John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, Baroness Greenfield and Henry Allingham aged 113, one of the last veterans of the First World War.

She has work in many private and public collections including the Queen's collection at Windsor, the Royal College of Surgeons in both London and Edinburgh, the Royal College of Anaesthetists and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, The Royal Institute, the Royal Society of Medicine, the University of Surrey and several regiments and public schools. She has also exhibited widely, including with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and in the BP Portrait Award as a prize winner. She is married to John Tatchell Freeman and they have a son, William.

The cafe in 'We Will Remember 2' (page 175) is the Café Gondrée in the French community of Bénouville and it is still owned by the Gondrée family as it was at the time of the liberation of Pegasus Bridge by the parachute regiment led by Major John Howard. They were dropped there by gliders to surprise the Germans. The building was the site of first combat during the D-Day invasion, and is best known for its role commemorating those events

Jane commented: 'One of my paintings is now in the official museum there and the other was re-located by Madame Gondrée who apparently put it in her own rival museum; all this was 25 years ago so who knows where they are now!'





*John and the artist, Robert Sosner*



*We Will Remember 1*



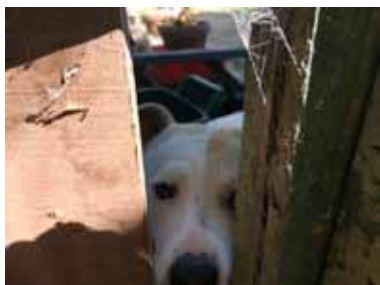
*John and the Robert Sosner*



*We Will Remember 2*



*Captain Carrott on patrol*



*'Staff' at number 50.*



*Jane, Jenny and Richard singing Carrickfergus with Peter,  
Bernadette and Angela of The Flanagans*

## The New Resident and The Summer Party July 2018

### *Name the Rabbit Competition!*

There is a new resident at 51 Woking Road, Guildford. He is probably a young buck forced to leave his colony and taken up residence under the shed at the end of the garden. The Annual Summer Party seemed the ideal occasion to decide on a name for him and entries from far and wide were submitted then party-goers voted for the winning name. Male and female names were allowed by the ever-tolerant judge. The entries for the resident Leopid were Sheddie; Sir Freddie of Fifty-One; Thumper; Gandalf; Matilda; Lapinlou [from Jocelyne Gwyer-Gibbs in France]; Killer; Captain Carrott; Rebus; Barry; Beryl; Sir Fluffikins; Countess; Mr Waabit; Bigfoot; Artemis; Hop Cross Bunny; Aphrodite; Kev; Hermes, and Snoopy.

The winner of a fiercely fought competition was Captain Carrott submitted by our Darwinian Sarah Dudley who was awarded £10 with which to buy books for her highly entertaining boys, George and Sam. Wine seemed inappropriate!

Dear Worms,

Captain Carrot is deepening his burrow under the shed as autumn approaches and does several keep-fit sessions a day starting as early as 7am [yes, worms, I am up then sometimes!] and intermittently throughout the day. His routine includes chasing the birds, including magpies with whom he does a kind of dance, shadow boxing and a type of Zen routine whereby he faces my neighbour Sheila The Birdwoman's fence for many reflective minutes, sometimes raising his front legs in supplication. Occasionally he faces Ken's fence but the 'Staff' is a distraction, especially when it charges at the fence on the other side, pokes its head through and barks loudly. He also practises fox evasion by doing sprints-Jane will appreciate this particular art. The Captain ignored two Waitrose carrots which I bought at great expense [18 pence] preferring to see them rot.



Thanks to Denise for providing food pellets and fresh straw for his burrow which he also ignored.



*Denise Snowdon*

Denise Snowdon, trying to look anonymous above in a Roman helmet, is wanted by 'Justice for Plants' for the serial murder of indoor plants which die one after the after. Countless plants have suffered negligence over the years and this must stop.

Thanks to everyone for making the Summer Party such fun and providing scrumptious food. I've asked Angela to pass on praise – from many of you – for the band which once again created such a festive atmosphere.

Chief Worm



*Worms from the front clockwise: Pauline, Anita, Katerina. Angela, Nick, Karen and Sarah.*

*Photo taken by Chief Worm.*

